

DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

CONSTITUTION

(Adopted by Academic Council - 9 December 2011)

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1. Title, Authority and Functions

1.1 Title

The title shall be the Academic Council of Dundalk Institute of Technology, hereafter referred to as the Academic Council.

1.2 Authority

The Academic Council is established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and any subsequent amendments, hereafter referred to as the Act.

1.3 Functions

The functions of the Academic Council are set out in the Act, as amended.

Sections 10(1) and 10 (3) of the Act ()

- (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.
- (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 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 sub-section;
 - (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.

1.4 Procedures

Section 10(6) of the Act determines that:

- (6) Subject to the provisions of this Act and to the directions of the governing body, the academic council may regulate its own procedure.

2. Membership

2.1 Requirements of the Act

Section 10(2) of the Act requires that:

- (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.

2.2 Membership

2.2.1 Maximum Membership

The membership shall consist of ex-officio and elected members with the maximum membership of the Academic Council being as follows:

Ex-Officio Members

<i>Role</i>	<i>Maximum Number of Seats</i>
President	1
Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar	1
Heads of Academic School	4
Heads of Academic Departments	13
Head of Research and Graduate Studies	1
Head of Learning and Teaching	1
Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance	1
Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager	1
Librarian	1
The Vice President for Strategy, Communications and Development.	1
Registered Student Body	2
<i>Total of Ex-Officio Members</i>	27

Elected Members

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Maximum Number of Seats</i>
School of Business & Humanities	7
School of Engineering	6
School of Health & Science	6
School of Informatics & Creative Arts	6
All Academic Schools ¹	Variable
All Academic Schools ²	2
All Elected Member Constituencies ³	Variable
Administrative/Support/Technical Staff	1
<i>Total of Elected Members</i>	28+

<i>Total Membership</i>	55+
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¹ This constituency only has seats in the event of there being an unfilled vacancy in an academic school constituency, in accordance with section 2.8.3. The maximum number of seats is therefore the number of such unfilled vacancies.

² Two additional elected members of the minority gender.

³ This constituency only has seats in the event of section 2.2.3 (gender balance) not being fulfilled. As per the requirements of section 2.8.5 sufficient members will be elected from all Elected Member constituencies of the required gender to fulfill the requirements of section 2.2.3.

2.2.2 Actual Membership

The actual membership of the Academic Council at any particular time shall be the maximum total membership less the number of seats suppressed in accordance with section 2.9.

2.2.3 Gender Balance

The membership shall have regard to the extent to which gender is represented and shall have appropriate gender balance such that not less than 40 per cent of the members of the Academic Council shall be female and not less than 40 per cent of them shall be male.

2.3 Term of Office

The term of office of the Academic Council shall be in accordance with the Act.

Section 10(2)(c) of the Act

- (c) The members appointed to the academic council shall hold office for a period of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment.

2.4 Officers

2.4.1 Chairperson

The President of the Institute shall be the chairperson of the Academic Council in accordance with the Act.

Third Schedule of the Act, Section 9

The President shall be ex officio a member of the academic council and, if present, shall preside at all meetings of that council and shall be entitled to be a member of every committee established by the council.

2.4.2 Vice-Chairperson

A vice-chairperson shall be elected from among the elected members of the Academic Council at its first meeting.

2.4.3 Secretary

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar of the Institute shall be the secretary of the Academic Council.

2.5 Election of Elected Members

2.5.1 Method of Election

Elections of elected positions shall be by secret ballot using proportional representation with a single, transferable vote using the Seanad Éireann procedures.

2.5.2 Administrative/Support/Technical Representative

The members of staff eligible to be the administrative/support/technical representative to the Academic Council shall be the same as those eligible to be an administrative/support/technical representative to the Governing Body.

The members of staff entitled to vote in the election of the administrative/support/technical representative shall be the same as those entitled to vote in the election of an administrative/support/technical representative to the Governing Body.

Every person who is a member of the permanent full-time non-academic staff of the Institute and is required to work not less than 50% of the number of hours which a full-time member of such staff is required to work shall be eligible.

2.5.3 Academic Schools' Representatives

The members of staff eligible to be an academic school representative to the Academic Council shall be the same as those eligible to be an academic staff representative to the Governing Body.

The members of staff entitled to have a vote in the election of an academic staff representative shall be the same as those entitled to vote in the election of academic staff representatives to the Governing Body.

A member of the full-time academic staff of the Institute whose contract of employment is not less than 50% of a whole time equivalent and/or is timetabled to teach not less than 280 hours per academic year shall be eligible.

The members of staff eligible to be a representative from a particular academic school and entitled to vote in the election of such a representative, shall be those members of the academic staff - subject to the preceding provisos - assigned, at the time of the election, to that particular school.

Within each academic school three constituencies will be established: male, female and gender not specified. At the outset of each Academic Council election, the Registrar's Office will consider the gender balance of the ex-officio membership and then decide on how many seats to assign to each constituency within each School with due consideration to the requirements of section 2.2, in order to achieve overall gender balance of the Council as defined in section 2.2, specifically section 2.2.3.

2.6 Substitution of an Elected Member

2.6.1 Process of substitution

An elected member, not being a nominee of the Governing Body or a student representative, on a planned absence⁴ or unplanned absence⁵ shall be substituted, by a substitute member from the same constituency, for the duration⁶ of the absence, in accordance with section 2.8. Substitution will not compromise gender balance.

The secretary of the Academic Council shall, at the first appropriate meeting, record the commencement of any such substitution, including the names of both the substitute and the member being substituted, in the minutes of the Academic Council.

2.6.2 Election and role of a Substitute Member

The eligibility rules for being a substitute member, the entitlement to vote in the election of such a member and the method of election used shall be identical to that described for elected members in section 2.5.

⁴ Examples of a planned absence include acting in a post that would have an ex-officio entitlement on Council, secondment to a post that would remove the member's eligibility to represent that constituency as determined by section 2.5, career break, maternity leave, parental leave and adoptive leave.

⁵ An example of an unplanned absence is being on official sick leave.

⁶ The start date and end date of absences shall be as officially recorded by the Human Resources department.

The substitute member shall take the place of the elected member on the Academic Council and its committees for the duration of the substitution.

2.6.3 Return of an Elected Member

When the elected member returns at the end of the absence, the substitute for that member shall immediately vacate the Academic Council.

The secretary of the Academic Council shall, at the first appropriate meeting, record the termination of the substitution, including the names of both the member returning and the substitute vacating, in the minutes of the Academic Council.

2.7 Resignation from the Academic Council

2.7.1 Resignation of an Elected Member

An elected member may, at any time, resign from membership of the Academic Council by a letter addressed to the chairperson of the Governing Body.

A copy of this letter shall be sent by the resigning member to the secretary of the Academic Council.

The resignation shall take effect from the date of the letter of resignation.

2.7.2 Required Resignation of an Elected Member

An elected member of the Academic Council, not being a nominee of the Governing Body or a student representative, who is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Academic Council, unless such absence was planned or unplanned or was approved by the Academic Council, shall be deemed to have resigned from the Academic Council.

2.7.3 Resignation of a Student Representative

A student representative of the Academic Council who ceases to be a student of the Institute, shall be deemed to have resigned from the Academic Council.

2.7.4 Replacement due to Resignation

An elected member, who resigns as described in the previous sub-sections, shall be replaced for the remainder of that person's period of office, in accordance with section 2.8.

2.8 Filling of Vacancies of Elected Members

2.8.1 Timescale

Vacancies, arising from resignations, planned and unplanned absences, or for other reasons, shall be filled within eight weeks of such vacancy occurring, in accordance with section 2.5.

2.8.2 Eligibility of Substitute Members

An existing substitute member shall be eligible to stand for election for a vacancy resulting from a resignation.

2.8.3 Unfilled Vacancy in an Academic School Constituency

If, subsequent to an election, a vacancy in an academic school constituency remains unfilled after the eight-week period in section 2.8.1 has elapsed and two election calls

have been made, a new election to fill the vacancy shall take place in a constituency which is the union of the constituencies of all the academic schools.

The members of staff entitled to vote in such an election and the members of staff eligible to be a representative shall be all members of staff referred to in section 2.5.3.

If the seat remains unfilled after a single election call within a further three-week period then the seat shall be suppressed in accordance with section 2.9.

2.8.4 Unfilled Vacancy in the Administrative/Support/Technical Staff Constituency

If, subsequent to an election, a vacancy in the administrative/support/technical staff constituency remains unfilled after the eight-week period in section 2.8.1 has elapsed and two election calls have been made then the seat shall be suppressed in accordance with section 2.9.

2.8.5 Additional Election to Achieve Gender Balance (where required)

If, subsequent to an election and after the requirements of sections 2.8.3 and 2.8.4, the gender balance of section 2.2.3 is not fulfilled then a new election in the All Elected Member Constituency (Section 2.2.1, footnote 2) shall take place to fill sufficient seats to obtain the required gender balance for Council as a whole.

The members of staff entitled to vote in such an election shall be all members of staff referred to in sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3.

The members of staff entitled to be a representative in such an election shall be restricted to the gender underrepresented and shall be all members of staff referred to in sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3.

If the requirements of section 2.2.3 remain unfulfilled then a new Council election shall take place.

2.9 Suppression of Seats

Where a seat remains unfilled after the period specified, in the constituencies referenced in sections 2.8.3 and 2.8.4, then that seat shall be suppressed and shall remain vacant for the duration of that Academic Council. The number of members for the appropriate constituency in section 2.2.1 shall be reduced accordingly for this duration and the actual membership similarly adjusted.

Where an ex-officio position is unfilled, the associated seat in section 2.2.1 shall be suppressed for the duration that the position remains unfilled and the actual membership adjusted accordingly.

Where a seat, other than those already referenced in this section, is unfilled, the seat shall be suppressed for the duration that the position remains unfilled and the actual membership adjusted accordingly.

3. Committees

3.1 Establishment

The Academic Council may establish committees in accordance with the Act.

Sections 10(4) and (5) of the Act

- (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.

3.2 Standing Committee

The Academic Council shall have a Standing Committee. The membership shall have regard to the extent to which gender is represented and shall have appropriate gender balance such that not less than 40 per cent of the members of the Academic Council shall be female and not less than 40 per cent of them shall be male.

3.3 Authority

The decisions of all committees shall be subject to the confirmation of the Academic Council. The Academic Council may determine by motion the processes by which such confirmations are achieved.

3.4 Membership

The President and Registrar shall be ex-officio members of all committees of the Academic Council.

In addition to the President and Registrar, a committee shall have at least four Academic Council members, at least two of whom shall be elected members, nominated by the Academic Council from its membership.

3.5 Terms of Reference

Each committee established by Council should have agreed Terms of Reference.

3.6 Duration

The duration of all committees shall not continue past the first meeting of a new Academic Council.

4. Meetings

4.1 Frequency and Time of Meetings

Meetings of the Academic Council or a committee shall last not more than two hours, unless agreed by the Academic Council or the particular committee. A procedural motion to prolong a meeting by a time period (not exceeding thirty minutes) must be proposed and agreed by the Academic Council, or the particular committee, if the meeting is to continue for longer than two hours.

The times and dates of ordinary meetings shall be agreed by the Academic Council.

Normally, all meetings shall be held during the academic year.

At least one meeting shall be held each term, and additional meetings may be held as required.

4.2 Chairing of Meetings

In the absence of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson shall chair the meeting and, in absence of both, the Academic Council shall elect one of its members to act as chairperson for that meeting.

4.3 Special Meetings

A special meeting may be called by the President or by the Standing Committee.

A special meeting shall be called within seven days of a written request by eleven members of the Academic Council to the President or, in his/her absence, the vice-chairperson.

4.4 Notice of Meetings

4.4.1 Ordinary Meeting

Each member of the Academic Council shall be entitled to three weeks notice of an ordinary meeting in writing, indicating the time and place, together with the draft agenda and preliminary documentation.

4.4.2 Special Meeting

Each member of the Academic Council shall be entitled to one working day's notice of a special meeting.

4.5 Agenda

4.5.1 Ordinary Meeting

The agenda for an ordinary meeting shall normally contain the items for discussion at the meeting and shall be circulated not later than two weeks before such a meeting.

All documentation relevant to an agenda item must be distributed at least one week prior to the date and time of the meeting.

Any member of the Academic Council may place an item for discussion on the agenda and may propose or second a motion, in accordance with section 4.6.

Agenda items not discussed at meetings shall only be deemed to be agreed or noted with the unanimous approval of the members present. Any items not discussed and not so agreed or noted shall be deferred to the next meeting.

4.5.2 Special Meeting

The agenda for a special meeting shall be determined by those calling the meeting and must be circulated with the notice of the meeting.

4.5.3 Emergency Items

At the beginning of an ordinary meeting of the Academic Council any member may seek to add an item to the agenda as an emergency item.

An emergency item is one that could not have been foreseen before the final agenda was issued and which must be resolved before the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Council.

A vote must be held on each proposal for an emergency item to be inscribed, and for it to be inscribed it must receive the assenting votes of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting.

4.6 Motions

4.6.1 Ordinary Motion

All motions submitted for consideration by the Academic Council must be accompanied by the names of the proposer and seconder and must appear in full on the agenda, as submitted.

4.6.2 Motion for Referral to the Governing Body

In order that any motion, agreed by the Academic Council, is brought to the immediate attention of the Governing Body, a related procedural motion must be placed on the agenda, and agreed, in accordance with this Constitution - the text of such a procedural motion to read:

"That Motion [motion identifier] be forwarded to the next meeting of the Governing Body, for its immediate attention".

4.7 Quorum

4.7.1 Academic Council Meetings

The quorum for a meeting shall be eleven members of the Academic Council, at least two of whom must be elected members, present at the time and place of the meeting.

4.7.2 Committees

The quorums for committees shall be decided by the Academic Council but must include at least two members of the Academic Council, at least one of whom must be an elected member.

4.7.3 Absence of Quorum

If a quorum is not present fifteen minutes after the scheduled start of a meeting of the Academic Council or a committee, the meeting shall be postponed.

No business shall be transacted at a meeting of the Academic Council or a committee, where the number of members present falls below the required quorum.

Where there is continued difficulty in reaching a quorum, the remaining members of a committee may constitute themselves as a working group and submit particular motions to the Academic Council.

4.8 Voting

4.8.1 Decisions

Every question at a meeting of the Academic Council, or committees, shall be determined by a simple majority, except for decisions made in accordance with sections 4.5.3 and 6.

4.8.2 Show of Hands

Voting at meetings shall normally be by a show of hands of those present at the meeting and entitled to vote.

4.8.3 Secret Ballot

Any member present may propose that voting on a particular question be by secret ballot and, if this proposal is seconded, the question shall be decided by secret ballot.

4.8.4 Equality of Votes

In the event of an equal division of the votes, the chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

4.9 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.

4.10 Minutes

4.10.1 Content of Minutes

The minutes of meetings shall record attendance and decisions made by the Academic Council and committees, except where a member of the Academic Council or a committee specifically requests that his/her disagreement with a decision be recorded.

Each item of the minutes may include a section where opinion, views and specific data related to the item may be recorded.

4.10.2 Adoption of minutes

Minutes of meetings shall be proposed and seconded and adopted in accordance with section 4.8.

4.10.3 Draft minutes of Academic Council

Draft minutes of Academic Council meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Academic Council at least one week in advance of the next ordinary meeting.

4.10.4 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of committees shall be circulated to the Academic Council.

5. Availability of Documentation

5.1 Adopted Documents and Agendas

All adopted documents, as well as draft and final agendas, for meetings of the Academic Council shall be made available to all members of the Institute and to the public.

The Academic Council may, by decision, withhold from publication documents that are protected from disclosure by the Freedom of Information Act.

5.2 Working Documents

The Academic Council, or committees, may at their discretion make working documents available to interested parties.

6. Changes to the Constitution of the Academic Council

A motion, recommending to the Governing Body a change in the Constitution of the Academic Council, must have the support of at least two-thirds of the actual membership of the Academic Council.

Such a motion may not be inscribed on the agenda as an emergency item.