

ACADEMIC BOARD

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND STANDING ORDERS 2025-26

1. Authority

Under delegated authority from the Articles of Association of the University there should be an Academic Board to regulate and oversee the academic work of the University with responsibilities for maintaining and enhancing the academic quality of the University's academic provision and the academic standard for awards.

The Academic Board shall also advise the Vice-Chancellor and the Board of Governors on academic matters of strategic importance to the welfare and long-term sustainability of the University. This will include the quality of teaching and research, the quality of the student experience, and the overall effectiveness of policies and services that support academic endeavour.

2. Duties

The Articles of Association state that the Academic Board should have the following responsibilities:-

- i) Responsibility for general issues relating to the research, scholarship, knowledge exchange and courses at the University (including the criteria for the admission of students).
- ii) The appointment and removal of internal and external examiners;
- iii) Policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students;
- iv) The content of the curriculum;
- v) Academic standards and the validation and review of courses;
- vi) The procedures for the award of qualifications and the conferment of academic titles;
- vii) The procedures for the exclusion of students for academic reasons;
- viii) The procedures for student discipline and complaint.

The Academic Board shall also consider the development of the academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them and for advising the Vice-Chancellor and the Board of Governors thereon. It shall also advise on such other matters that the Board of Governors or the Vice Chancellor refers to the Academic Board.

3. Committees and Delegated Authority

The Academic Board may establish committees or sub-committees for the purposes of enabling it to carry out its responsibilities as set out above. The establishment of such committees should be approved by the Vice-Chancellor and the Board of Governors. The membership of such Committees shall be determined by the Academic Board.

The current Committees of Academic Board are:

- Academic Strategy and Student Experience Committee
- Portfolio Development Committee
- Academic Partnerships Committee
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

The current sub-committees of Academic Board are:

- Faculty Quality, Curriculum and Student Experience Committees x 3 (including the School of Medicine)
- Education and Student Outcomes Committee
- Research Degrees sub-Committee
- Ethics sub-Committee
- St Mary's University Press
- Apprenticeship Quality Board

The responsibilities of the Academic Board can be delegated to its Committees or sub-Committees or individual members of staff. Delegations of authority shall be approved by the Board of Governors and noted within the University's Scheme of Delegation.

A summary of powers delegated by the Academic Board can be found at Appendix 1 of these terms of reference and standing orders.

4. Composition and Membership

4.1 Chair of Academic Board

The Vice-Chancellor shall be Chair the Academic Board. If the Vice Chancellor is unable to chair the meeting then the Provost shall Chair in their place. If neither is available to chair the meeting then the Vice Chancellor shall nominate an alternate to Chair the meeting. If for any reason it is not possible for the Vice-Chancellor to nominate a Chair then the University Secretary shall nominate.

4.2 Membership of the Academic Board

Under the University's Articles of Association there can be a maximum of 20 members of the Academic Board. It is intended that that membership of the Academic Board should reflect the diverse academic community at the University ensuring that it has a diversity of skills, knowledge and experience to be effective. The membership shall be as follows:-

Executive Members

Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Provost

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Dean of Education and Outcomes

Dean of Faculty of Arts, Business, Law, Education and Theology

Dean of Faculty of Sports Technology and Health Sciences

Founding Dean of School of Medicine

Director of International Engagement, Student Recruitment and Admissions

Rector of Mater Ecclesiae College

Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange

Non-Executive (elected) Members

Representative from the Faculty of Arts, Business, Law, Education and Theology (2)

Representatives from the Faculty of Sports Technology and Health Sciences (2)

A representative elected by the professoriate of the University

Early Career Academic Member

Postgraduate Research Member

Sabbatical nominated by the Students' Union

A student elected by the student body

In Attendance

University Secretary and Director of Strategic Planning, Secretary to the Board

University Academic Strategy Project Manager, Minuting Secretary

4.3 Elections

The University Secretary shall be responsible for arranging elections to the Academic Board.

With the exception of the sabbaticals nominated by the Students' Union the term of an elected representative shall be three years.

Representatives of the Faculties can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms on the Academic Board.

Early career Academic Members and Postgraduate Research Members can serve for one term in that capacity; however, they may be elected to represent a Faculty for a further consecutive term.

The term of a sabbatical nominated by the Students' Union shall be one year with a maximum of two terms being served.

An Early Career Academic member is defined as an academic member of staff employed on an academic contract who had their doctoral viva not more than five years before the date of their election to the Academic Board.

A postgraduate research member is defined as an individual who is undertaking a postgraduate research degree at St Mary's University.

4.4 *Other Attendees at Meetings*

Other members of staff may attend meetings of the Academic Board in order to present items for noting or discussion and/or approval. Their attendance shall be approved in advance by the Chair.

Members of the Board of Governors may attend meetings of the Academic Board as observers.

4.5 *Non-Attendance and Nomination of Deputies*

Members of the Academic Board who are unable to attend a specific meeting may nominate a deputy to attend in their place. Executive members may nominate one of their direct reports to attend in their place. Elected members may nominate someone from within the constituency from within which they have been elected. The University Secretary should be notified in advance if a deputy has been nominated.

If a member of the Academic Board fails to attend four consecutive meetings of the Academic Board without a good reason which is found acceptable by the Chair then they will be deemed to have resigned.

If a member of the Academic Board is on maternity, paternity, or adoption leave then an alternative representative may be elected for a fixed term. The University Secretary shall be responsible for the election of the alternative representative.

5. Frequency and Conduct of Meetings

There shall be a minimum of four meetings of the Academic Board during the academic year.

The agenda of the meeting shall be set by the Chair with support from the University Secretary. Members of the Academic Board may suggest items for the agenda with any such suggestions being given up to 2 weeks before the meeting.

Papers should be distributed five working days before the meeting. Papers which are submitted late may potentially not be accepted and the item be removed from the agenda. Meeting papers will be made available to the University Community with the exception of those which are confidential in nature.

Papers are assumed to have been read by members of the Academic Board and they should therefore be presented in a succinct style which allows maximum time for debate and input from members of the Academic Board.

The Academic Board shall be required to vote on items for approval. A vote shall be carried by a simple majority. In the event of a tie the Chair shall have the casting vote.

The approved minutes of the Academic Board will be made available to the University Community and will also be included in the agenda of the Board of Governors for noting.

6. Representation on the Board of Governors

The Vice-Chancellor is a member of the Board of Governors and as such will ensure that it is updated on the work of the Academic Board.

Under the Board of Governors regulations the Academic Board shall nominate one of its members to sit on the Board of Governors. This member shall be elected by the Non-Executive members of the Academic Board. The University Secretary shall oversee any such election.

The nominee of the Academic Board shall be a member of the Board of Governors for a term of three years. After such time they can stand down as a member of the Board of Governors or stand for re-election by the Academic Board. Under the Articles of Association the Academic Board nominee can serve as a governor for a maximum of nine years.

7 Conflict of Interests and Reserved Business

Any member of the Academic Board will be asked to withdraw from that part of any meeting of the Academic Board or of a committee of the Academic Board at which there will be consideration of their appointment, grading, promotion, suspension, dismissal, retirement, salary or conditions of service of or of any disciplinary or capability proceedings proposed to be taken against them.

The Student members of the Academic Board will be asked to withdraw from that part of any meeting of the Academic Board or of a committee of the Academic Board at which there will be consideration of the appointment, grading, promotion, suspension, dismissal, retirement, salary or conditions of service of or of any disciplinary or capability proceedings proposed to be taken against any member of Staff.

The Student members of the Academic Board will be asked to withdraw from that part of any meeting of the Academic Board or of a committee of the Academic Board at which there will be consideration of their suspension, expulsion or of any other matter relating to them except where any regulation in the disciplinary or other procedure relating to Students entitles them to be present.

END

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF DELEGATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

The table below breaks down the responsibilities of the Academic Board as set out in the Articles of the University. It also sets out suggestions as to where these responsibilities should be delegated.

Responsibility	Delegated Decision Maker
The appointment and removal of internal and external examiners	Academic Strategy and Student Experience Committee
Academic standards and the validation and review of courses	Portfolio Development Committee
The procedures for the exclusion of students for academic reasons and the procedures for student discipline and complaint	Academic Strategy and Student Experience Committee
Criteria for the admission of students	Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the Provost