



Academic Quality Framework

Discipline Programme Board Terms of Reference

**Approved by Academic Council
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Table of Contents

1. Responsibilities.....	3
2. Membership	6
3. Programme Coordinators.....	7
4. Student Representatives	8
5. Discipline Programmes Board Meetings.....	8
6. Reporting and Communication	14
7. Committees	14

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A Discipline Programmes Board is a sub-committee of a Faculty Board. Under the guidance and direction of a School, it oversees and monitors quality assurance and enhancement processes for all programmes within its remit. It is responsible for the quality of the programmes within its remit and for ensuring all relevant quality assurance and enhancement processes are completed, as described in the [Management of Quality Enhancement of Academic Programmes](#).

1. Responsibilities

Each Discipline Programmes Board has the following responsibilities:

Programme Portfolio Oversight

- a. Maintain oversight of the programmes within its remit, incl. programme provision statistics. These include, but are not limited to number of programmes; number of students; NFQ levels; modes of delivery (e.g. part-time, full-time, blended, on-line); award type.

Student Profile and Performance Oversight

- b. Annually review student data and profile trends across its programmes, including but not limited to:
 - i. Registrations;
 - ii. Progression and retention rates;
 - iii. Completion and graduation statistics;
 - iv. Diversity;
 - v. International participation.

Student Experience Oversight

- c. Oversee student engagement and the student experience for programmes within its remit and to make recommendations to Programmes Teams, Schools or Faculty Boards;
- d. Provide advice and guidance to Programme Teams to encourage best practice in learning, teaching and assessment methodologies to enable all students to engage with the subject matter more effectively, highlighting areas of good practice to the Faculty Board;

Assessment Oversight

- e. Nominate external examiners to the Faculty Board for each programme within its remit;
- f. Oversee the implementation of the University's academic regulations, policies and procedures within the programmes, reporting to the Faculty Board on matters in this regard;

Implementation of Validations and Reviews

- g. Nominate members of programme validation and review panels to the Faculty Board as per the processes outlined in the procedures for Programme Validation and Programme Review.
- h. Review and submit programme documentation to the Faculty Board under the procedures for Programme Validation, Programme Review, School Review and Faculty Review;
- i. Consider Programme Review panel reports and submit responses to such reports, including submission of revised documentation to the Faculty Board;

- j. Consider programme accreditation reports and ensure any required actions are included in the Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan;
- k. Using the Programme and Module Catalogue, approve Type 1 amendments to programmes within the remit of the Discipline Programmes Board and endorse Types 2 and 3 amendments and submit to the Faculty Board, as per the [Making Changes to Programmes & Modules Process](#).
- l. Ensure proposed module amendments, and those approved by the Schools, are appropriate for the relevant programmes within the remit of the Discipline Programmes Board. Where a proposed or approved change is not deemed to be appropriate, to communicate with the relevant School to seek a solution through a further amendment to the module, or replacement of a module. Where a solution cannot be reached, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee of the Faculty Board.
- m. Request, where appropriate, that the Faculty Board convenes a Major Amendment Panel to review the changes or that a full Programme Review should be completed.

Quality Framework Implementation

- n. Oversee the implementation of the University Quality Framework and the Education Model across the programmes within the remit of Discipline Programmes Board and report to the Faculty Board on any matters in this regard;
- o. Monitor the functioning of all Programme Teams for which it is responsible, ensuring appropriate student representation and input into programme-related decisions;
- p. Ensure each programme within the remit of the Discipline Programmes Board completes and submits an annual Programme Enhancement Report based on its critical evaluation of the programme, based on the data in 1(b) above;

- q. Ensure that the development of each Programme Enhancement Report has been informed by stakeholder feedback and in particular, evidences full consideration of feedback from students and the external examiner reports;
- r. Review the Programme Enhancement Reports to identify common trends and issues across the Programme Enhancement Reports that require further consideration by Heads of School or the Faculty Board;
- s. Develop and continually update the Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan and to oversee the implementation of actions therein assigned to the Programme Teams, as per the Annual Quality Enhancement Process.
- t. Provide a summary report on the issues, trends and actions that need to be addressed in the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan to the University Programmes Board, as per the Annual Quality Enhancement Process;
- u. Propose to the Faculty Board the introduction of an Exit Award within one or more of the programmes within the remit of the Discipline Programmes Board, where an exit award was not considered during the programme validation or review process.
- v. Propose changes to any programmes within the remit of the Discipline Programmes Board to the Faculty Board;

Other

- w. Carry out such other functions as are considered appropriate subject to the approval of the Faculty Board.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The membership of the Discipline Programmes Board comprises:

- Head of School (or nominee) from one of the Schools responsible for the programmes (Chairperson);
 - Heads of School (or nominees) from all other Schools involved in the delivery of the programmes;
 - Programme Coordinator from each Programme Team reporting to the Discipline Programmes Board;
 - At least one Class Representative from each of the programmes;
 - A representative of the technical officers who support programme delivery (where applicable);
- 2.2 With the approval of the Faculty Board, up to two additional members may be co-opted onto the Discipline Programmes Board. Additionally, other persons may be invited to attend the Discipline Programmes Board meetings by the , as considered appropriate. To add members to Discipline Programmes Board, the Chairperson should write to the Chairperson of the Faculty Board with the names of the proposed additional members and a rationale for their membership.

3. Programme Coordinators

- 3.1 Programme Coordinators shall be appointed by the School as described in the [Management of Quality Enhancement of Academic Programmes](#) process.
- 3.2 It is expected that the Programme Coordinators shall attend all meetings and convey the views of the Programme Team in relation to all relevant matters raised. The Programme Coordinator will also ensure that members of the Programme Team are aware of any documents circulated for consultation.
- 3.3 In the event a Programme Coordinator cannot attend a Discipline Programmes Board meeting, the Chairperson should be notified, and the Programme

Coordinator should nominate a representative from the Programme Team to attend instead.

4. Student Representatives

- 4.1 The student representative attending the Discipline Programmes Board will be one of the class representatives from that programme. The class representative will be chosen in accordance with the Students' Union procedures prior to each meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board.
- 4.2 The class representative attending the meeting is expected to convey the views of their peers in relation to all relevant matters raised and report back on all decisions and agreed actions.

5. Discipline Programmes Board Meetings

Chairperson

- 5.1 The Head of School or nominee will be the Chairperson of the Discipline Programmes Board.

Secretariat

- 5.2 The secretariat will be provided by the School Office.

Quorum

- 5.3 The quorum for all Discipline Programmes Board meetings shall be 50% of the complete membership plus one. Where the complete membership constitutes an

odd number, the quorum shall be 50% of the membership rounded up to the next whole number.

- 5.4 Discipline Programmes Board may hold, or continue, a meeting by the use of any means of communication by which all the members can hear and be heard at the same time, such as in on-site meetings or online meetings.
- i. A member of the Discipline Programmes Board who participates in an online meeting is taken for all purposes to have been present at the meeting.
 - ii. A duly convened meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board at which a quorum is present, shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, power and discretions vested in or exercisable by the Discipline Programmes Board.

Frequency of Meetings

- 5.5 Each Discipline Programmes Board shall hold at least three meetings per Academic Year and such and so many additional meetings as may be necessary, as determined by the Chairperson, for the due fulfilment of its functions.

Notice and Convening of Meetings

- 5.6 The dates of the Discipline Programmes Board meetings should be determined by the Chairperson and published at the start of the Academic Year. These meeting dates should be aligned to the document submission dates of the Faculty Board and its committees.
- 5.7 Additional meetings of the Discipline Programmes Board may be summoned by the secretariat at the request of the Chairperson.

- 5.8 The secretariat to the Discipline Programmes Board shall ensure that all members receive information and documents in a timely manner to enable full and proper consideration to be given to the issues.
- 5.9 Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the format, venue, time and date, together with an agenda, shall be forwarded to each member of the Discipline Programmes Board electronically, and any other person required to attend, not less than five working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting documentation shall be sent, or made available electronically, to the Discipline Programmes Board members and to other attendees as appropriate, at the same time.

Attendance at Meetings

- 5.10 Only members of Discipline Programmes Boards have the right to attend Discipline Programmes Board meetings. Other individuals from the University and external advisers may be invited to attend, by the Chairperson, for all or part of any meeting, as and when such attendance is deemed appropriate.
- 5.11 Attendances shall be recorded as Present, Apologies (apology furnished in advance or at the meeting) or Absent (no apology furnished).
- 5.12 If a member cannot attend a meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board, this should be communicated to the Secretariat in advance of the meeting, or alternatively, it can be communicated to the Chairperson at the commencement of the meeting.

Agenda Items

- 5.13 The agenda shall contain details of the matters to be put before the meeting for discussion.

- 5.14 Any member of the Discipline Programmes Board may request a matter be placed on the agenda for discussion, provided it is conveyed to the secretariat in writing not less than ten working days in advance of the meeting to which it refers (not including the date of the meeting), and the matter falls within the terms of reference of Discipline Programmes Board. Such matters shall be considered by the Chairperson as to their appropriateness for inclusion in the agenda.
- 5.15 Any matter which has been accepted for discussion in accordance with the provision of these Terms of Reference shall be placed before the meeting by the Chairperson in the order in which it appears on the agenda.
- 5.16 The inclusion of the term “Any Other Business” (AOB) on the agenda shall be used by the Chairperson only to inform the meeting of any other items which are germane to the matters already discussed, and for the elucidation of any other items of a factual or relevant nature. The Chairperson may permit a member to raise a matter under AOB, provided this item has already been raised with the Chairperson prior to the meeting, and the Chairperson has decided it was appropriate to bring it to the attention of the Discipline Programmes Board members for consideration under AOB.
- 5.17 Approved agenda items must be submitted in the correct format to the secretariat ten working days before the date of the Discipline Programmes Board meeting, to facilitate the timely distribution of documentation to members.
- 5.18 The Chairperson has the delegated authority of the Discipline Programmes Board to remove an item from the agenda if it is not received in time to allow members due consideration of the matter to a suitable standard.

Proceedings at Meetings

- 5.19 Members who wish to speak at any meeting shall make their address to the meeting through, and at the request of, the Chairperson.

- 5.20 The first business of each meeting shall be the reading and approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting which, if approved, shall be signed by the Chairperson as proof of the accuracy thereof. The secretariat shall minute the decisions and resolutions of all meetings of the Discipline Programmes Board, including recording of the names of those present and in attendance.
- 5.21 The minutes of the meeting shall be drawn up and approved at the next meeting of Discipline Programmes Board. No discussion shall take place upon the minutes, except regarding their accuracy, or where the Chairperson considers discussion appropriate.
- 5.22 Any amendment to the minutes shall be recorded and agreed by the Discipline Programmes Board at the next meeting. The minutes of the Discipline Programmes Board meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Discipline Programmes Board.
- 5.23 Every question at a meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting on the question. In the case of an equal division of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.
- 5.24 Any member of the Discipline Programmes Board may, at any time during a meeting and without notice, raise a point of order. The Chairperson's ruling on the acceptability of the point of order shall be subject to a vote of the meeting if called for by the member raising the point of order.

Duration of Meetings

- 5.25 Each meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board shall continue until such time as the business to be conducted thereat shall have been satisfactory dealt with.
- 5.26 In cases of extreme time pressure, the Chairperson may, at their discretion, reasonably exercise the following:

- i. Either curtail discussion of any motion or other matter before the meeting, putting the motion or matter before the meeting for a vote, or
- ii. Adjourn agenda items (other than minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising therefrom) to a subsequent meeting. This may be either a scheduled meeting or at an extraordinary meeting convened specially to consider them.

5.27 The Chairperson's ruling shall be final in regard of either alternative.

Procedures for Obtaining Decisions between Meetings

5.28 In accordance with subparagraphs 5.29, 5.30, 5.31 and 5.32 below, the Chairperson of the Discipline Programmes Board, has the delegated authority of the Discipline Programmes Board to deal with matters that in their opinion, are urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board, and are certified in writing.

5.29 In all situations, the Chairperson shall endeavour to convene a quorate meeting, to consider urgent matters that arise between meetings and shall only utilise this procedure as a final option having made every effort to hold a quorate meeting.

5.30 In seeking Chairperson's action, the person making the request shall in all cases prepare a written report. The report shall be in accordance with the same procedures and shall require the same clearances from other parties with an interest in the issues as if the report was to be submitted to a meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board. The report must specify the reason(s) for the urgency and the reason(s) why the matter cannot wait until the next meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board.

5.31 When submitted, the Chairperson shall, if practicable, also seek the views of the members of Discipline Programmes Board.

- 5.32 In respect of any decision taken by the Chairperson under this procedure, the Chairperson shall record their decision in writing, and shall also certify in writing that in their opinion, the issue is urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board.
- 5.33 The Chairperson shall report every decision taken under this procedure in writing to the next meeting of the Discipline Programmes Board for noting.

6. Reporting and Communication

- 6.1 The Chairperson shall be responsible for reporting the decisions and views of the Discipline Programmes Board to the Faculty Board.
- 6.2 Minutes shall be recorded and, when approved, submitted to the Faculty Board.
- 6.3 Approved minutes shall also be available on the University Intranet.

7. Committees

- 7.1 Each Discipline Programmes Board may establish other sub-committees, subject to the approval of the Faculty Board, or at the request of the University Programmes Board. To propose a new sub-committee, the Chairperson should write to the Chairperson of the University Programmes Board with the draft Terms of Reference, and a rationale for the establishment, of the new sub-committee.
- 7.2 The Discipline Programmes Board may establish working groups at any time to undertake specific tasks on behalf of the Board. The establishment of working groups does not require the approval of the University Programmes Board.
- 7.3 The Discipline Programmes Board may invite individuals from outside the University to become members of sub-committees, subject to the approval of the University Programmes Board. To propose external members of sub-committees, the Chairperson should write to the Chairperson of Faculty Board

with the names of the proposed external members and a rationale for their membership.

- 7.4 Discipline Programmes Board sub-committees will normally be chaired by a member of the Discipline Programmes Board.