ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

15 November 2019

The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) has been established as a standing sub-committee of the Academic board in accordance with Clause 11(2a) of the University of Gibraltar (Academic Board) Regulations 2018 (herein, the Regulations). The Terms of Reference and membership of this standing sub-committee are, in accordance with Clause 10(2) of the Regulations, subject to these Regulations (Appendix 1).

Membership

The membership of this standing sub-committee will include, in accordance with Clause 10(3) of the Regulations: (a) at least one member of the Academic Board; (b) at least one staff member of the University responsible for its agenda; and (c) appropriately experienced academics.

Responsibilities

In accordance with Clauses 10(1) and 11(2a) of the Regulations, the Academic Board has delegated to this standing sub-committee the fulfilment of the following of its responsibilities for which the sub-committee is granted the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Academic Board, those decisions being subject to ratification by the Academic Board [*text in italics refers to the corresponding clause in the Regulations*].

Taught programme quality oversight

Assuming general responsibility for ensuring that the standards of awards are maintained [*Clause 11(2a (i))*] also including (but not necessarily limited to):

- setting and safeguarding academic standards through quality assurance processes, including monitoring and review.
- overseeing the process for approving the content and structure of the curriculum including arrangements for the approval of new programmes (course validation), the review of existing programmes (periodic review) and confirmation of completion of annual monitoring.
- overseeing the application and interpretation of the University's Academic Quality Handbook on taught qualifications, periodically reviewing and, if necessary, amending regulations therein, and acting as final arbiter of the application and implementation of the regulations therein.
- endorsing and forwarding the recommendations of examiners to the Academic Board for the award of taught degrees.

Taught programme policy and implementation

Overseeing the development and implementation of University policy on the quality of learning and teaching [*Clause 11(2a (ii))*] also including (but not necessarily limited to):

- overseeing the setting of minimum academic entry requirements and criteria for admissions of students per the relevant regulations in the University Academic Quality Handbook.
- establishing and monitoring policies and procedures for the assessment and examination of the academic performance of students including establishing a Board of Examiners to act in accordance with the relevant regulations in the University Academic Quality Handbook and monitoring its procedures.

Learning and teaching

Advising the Vice-Chancellor on the enhancement of learning and teaching [*Clause 11(2a (iii))*], including, but not necessarily limited to ICT, e-learning, library resources, staff development, student accessibility and wider participation needs.

In accordance with Clause 10(4) of the Regulations, this standing sub-committee will submit reports to the Academic Board on its fulfilment of its responsibilities as outlined above; and this standing sub-committee will be subject to monitoring and evaluation by the Academic Board of the fulfilment of its responsibilities.

Appendix 1

UNIVERSITY OF GIBRALTAR ACT 2015

UNIVERSITY OF GIBRALTAR (ACADEMIC BOARD) REGULATIONS 2018[1]

Adopted as the Terms of Reference of the Academic Board and its Sub-Committees

In exercise of the powers conferred on him by sections 29 and 56 of the University of Gibraltar Act 2015, the Minister has made the following Regulations–

Title and commencement.

1. These Regulations may be cited as the University of Gibraltar (Academic Board) Regulations 2018 and come into force on the date of publication in the Gazette.

Establishment of the University of Gibraltar Academic Board

2.(1) In accordance with section 29(1) of the University of Gibraltar Act 2015, there is hereby established an Academic Board.

(2) The Academic Board shall be an autonomous committee of the University with responsibility to the Board of Governors.

Duties of the Academic Board

3.(1) The Academic Board shall undertake the academic governance functions of the University of Gibraltar.

(2) Without limiting subregulation (1), the Academic Board shall-

(a) be responsible for the oversight of research, scholarship, teaching and courses at the University of Gibraltar;

(b) regulate the University's academic work;

(c) govern the processes associated with academic life at the University including quality learning processes, curriculum enhancement, and the student learning experience; (d) advise on matters relating to the academic strategy in the University's Strategic Plan.

(3) In these regulations the academic governance functions of the University of Gibraltar include-

(a) advising the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Academic Programmes and Research on academic related matters including the continued development of academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them;

(b) setting minimum academic entry requirements and criteria for admissions of students;

[1] Published as Legal Notice no. 205 of 2018 in the SECOND SUPPLEMENT TO THE GIBRALTAR GAZETTE, No. 4506 of 24 September 2018

(c) setting, safeguarding and enhancing academic standards through quality assurance processes, including monitoring and review and the regulatory framework;

(d) establishing and monitoring policies and procedures for the assessment and examination of the academic performance of students;

(e) determining and implementing procedures for the appointment and removal of internal and external examiners (taught and research degrees);

(f) appointing and removing external examiners;

(g) approving the content and structure of the curriculum;

(h) establishing procedures for the exclusion of students for academic reasons;

(i) approving and monitoring collaborative partnerships as well as the requirements of validating and accrediting bodies;

(j) managing the relationship between the University and its Key Associate Partners and Associate Campuses;

(k) approving and monitoring relevant regulations for the conferment of the title of Professors of the University;

(l) approving and appointing honorary titles, visiting and adjunct Professors;

(m) establishing and monitoring academic procedures for interinstitutional partnerships, affiliations, publications and other collaborative frameworks;

(n) awarding and establishing procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles;

(o) ensuring that teaching and learning is subject to periodic external review commissioned from a qualified external agency which uses the UK Quality Code (as administered by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – or equivalent body) as its benchmark and which meets the requirements of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education; and

(p) submitting annual reports to the Board of Governors on academic decisions and actions, and giving assurance on the enhancement of quality and the maintenance of standards.

Composition of Academic Board

4.(1) The Academic Board shall consist of–

(a) the Vice Chancellor, who shall be the Chair of the Academic Board;

(b) the Director of Academic Programmes and Research;

(c) the Chairs of any committees established by the Academic Board under these regulations;

(d) the heads of faculties and schools at the University of Gibraltar subject to a maximum of three such heads. Where there are more than three such heads, all of the heads shall elect three representatives to serve on the Academic Board;

(e) one member of the academic staff of the University of Gibraltar elected by the academic staff;

(f) one enrolled degree-seeking student elected by the student body;

(g) no fewer than two and up to five external members appointed in accordance with subregulation (2).

(2) Appointments under subregulation (1)(g) shall-

(a) be made by the Academic Board, on the advice of the Academic Board's Nominations Group and with the consent of the Board of Governors; and

(b) be of suitably qualified and experienced professionals whose expertise will help to establish standards and to attain the quality outcomes necessary to meet the expectations of students and the requirements of the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority.

(3) The Nominations Group referred to in subregulation (2)(a) shall be comprised of the Vice-Chancellor, the Director of Academic Programmes and Research and two other members of the Academic Board falling within subregulation (1)(c), (d) of (g) appointed for the purpose by the ViceChancellor.

(4) In advising on appointments under subregulation (1)(g) the Nominations Group must maintain a skills matrix that provides an inventory of the Academic Board's requirements in terms of skills, qualifications and experience, explains how the membership at any one time matches to that inventory, and informs the search process for new members.

Duration of membership of the Academic Board

5. (1) Subject to subregulations (2), (3) and (4) any member of the Academic Board (other than a member referred to in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of regulation 4(1)) shall hold office for a maximum of two academic years.

Provided that the member referred to in regulation 4(1)(f) may only serve to the end of the academic year in which he or she ceases to be an enrolled degree seeking student.

(2) If the Board of Governors is satisfied that any member referred to in paragraph (d), (e), (f) and (g) of regulation 4(1)–

(a) has been absent from three consecutive meetings of the Academic Board without the permission of the Academic Board;

(b) has become bankrupt;

(c) has been convicted of a criminal offence and been sentenced to a term of imprisonment;

(d) has failed to comply with the University policies on conflicts of interest;

(e) is incapacitated by physical or mental illness; or

(f) is otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of a member,

it may declare his or her office as a member of the Academic Board to be vacant and thereupon such office shall become vacant.

(3) A member may have his or her membership terminated due to misconduct subject to-

(a) a vote of two-thirds of those present at an Academic Board meeting called in accordance with these regulations and for which due notice of the motion to terminate has been given; and

(b) the decision being ratified by the Board of Governors.

(4) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this regulation, any member other than a member referred to in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of regulation 4(1) may resign his office by giving written notice to the Academic Board.

(5) Any member of the Academic Board who ceases to be a member shall be eligible for re-appointment.

(6) The Vice Chancellor shall appoint a person as the Secretary of the Academic Board.

Meetings and proceedings

6. (1) The quorum at all meetings of the Academic Board, and meetings of committees and subcommittees of the Academic Board, shall be 1/3 of the membership of such Board, committee or subcommittee or three members (whichever is the higher).

(2) At all meetings of the Academic Board, the Chair, or, in his or her absence, such member as the Academic Board may select, shall preside.

(3) A member of the Academic Board referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) of regulation 4(1) who is unable to attend a meeting of the Academic Board, may, by notice in writing to the Secretary, nominate a named substitute to attend the meeting on his or her behalf.

(4) A person nominated in accordance with subsection (3) shall, subject to the approval of the Academic Board, be deemed a member of the Academic Board for the duration of that meeting.

(5) Any matters arising at a meeting of the Academic Board shall be decided by a majority of the members present and voting thereon at the meeting and, in the case of an equality of votes the matter shall be referred to the next meeting unless there is urgency in which case the person presiding shall have a second or casting vote.

(6) The Secretary to the Academic Board shall be in attendance at meetings. The Chair may invite any other officers of the University or other persons to attend for all or part of a meeting should this be required for the business of the meeting.

(7) The Academic Board shall meet at least twice per academic year. The Chair may call a special meeting of the Academic Board at any time subject to five days' notice being given except in the case of urgency.

(8) Meetings of the Academic Board shall, other than in exceptional circumstances or at the request of the Chair, be held on University premises in Gibraltar.

(9) The Secretary will, where practicable, make arrangements for any member outside Gibraltar to join a meeting of the Academic Board by videoconference or other electronic means: Where such arrangements are made and used the member shall be deemed to be in attendance at the said meeting.

(10) Decisions of the Academic Board may, in addition to being made at a meeting of the Academic Board undertaken in accordance with these regulations, be made in writing or electronically, in such form as the Secretary prescribes, and signed by a quorum of the membership.

Documentation for meetings

7.(1) The Secretary shall ensure that agendas and associated documentation for meetings of the Academic Board (including draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Academic Board and any relevant action points as reviewed by the Chair) are distributed at least three working days before the meeting.

(2) Distribution in accordance with subregulation (1) may be undertaken by means of an Academic Board module on the University's virtual platform (Canvas). Where distribution is undertaken in such manner the Secretary will ensure that members are notified of the availability of material.

(3) Papers received later than three working days before a meeting may only be accepted at the meeting with the Chair's permission.

(4) The Academic Board records must be retained by the Secretary in accordance with the University's Records Management Policy and Procedure.

Personal data

8. (1) The names of members of the Academic Board and its subcommittees may be published in such manner as the Academic Board or the Board of Governors considers appropriate.

(2) No other personal details of a member of the Academic Board, or one of its sub-committees, shall be made public without the express permission of such member.

(3) The contact details provided to the Secretary by members of the Academic Board and its subcommittees may be used by other members of Academic Board, subcommittees and by other Offices of the University for the conduct of University business.

Evaluation and review

9. (1) The Academic Board must undertake a self-assessment of its performance at least once every two years and provide a report to the Board of Governors on such performance.

(2) The Academic Board shall supply the Board of Governors with any information it requests to facilitate its review of the Academic Board's performance and its membership.

Committees and subcommittees

10. (1) The Academic Board may fulfil its responsibilities through standing committees, and, where it considers it practicable, sub-committees.

(2) The terms of reference and membership of such committees and subcommittees shall, subject to these regulations, be as decided by the Academic Board and as set out in writing by the Academic Board.

(3) Each committee shall include in its membership-

(a) at least one member of Academic Board;

(b) at least one staff member of the University responsible for its agenda; and

(c) appropriately experienced academics.

(4) The Academic Board shall receive reports from its committees and sub-committees and shall be responsible for monitoring and evaluating each committee's activities against their functions and responsibilities.

Transitional provisions

11. (1) The requirement for persons to be appointed to the Academic Board in accordance with regulations 4(1)(e), (f) and, subject to subregulation (4) below, (g) shall not apply to the first meeting of the Academic Board.

(2) The Academic Board shall, at its first meeting, appoint or, as the case may be, ratify the appointment of the following two committees in accordance with regulation 10-

(a) an Academic Quality and Standards Committee, whose terms of reference issued in accordance with regulation 10(2) shall include-

(i) general responsibility for ensuring that the standards of awards are maintained;

(ii) overseeing the development and implementation of University policy on the quality of learning and teaching; and

(iii) advising the Vice-Chancellor on the enhancement of learning and teaching;

(b) a Research and Research Degree Committee, whose terms of reference issued in accordance with regulation 10(2) shall include-

(i) general responsibility for ensuring that the standards of research degrees are maintained;

(ii) overseeing the development and implementation of University policy on research degrees; and

(iii) advising the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Academic Programmes and Research on research strategy and research ethics.

(3) Notwithstanding regulation 11(2), the chairs of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and of the Research and Research Degree Committee existing at the University of Gibraltar as at the date of publication of these regulations shall be deemed to be members of the Academic Board for the purposes of its first meeting.

(4) Notwithstanding regulation 4(2), the Board of Governors may, prior to the first meeting of the Academic Board, appoint two external members of the Academic Board from persons falling within the description in paragraph (b) of regulation 4(2).

Dated 24th September, 2018.

G H LICUDI QC,
Minister with responsibility for the University of Gibraltar.