



**UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON**

# **Purpose and Functions of the Academic Board**

**(Terms of Reference)**

## **Ordinance 3**

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# **A. Purpose and Functions of the Academic Board**

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To have oversight of and provide assurance to the Board of Trustees on the strategic direction and performance of the University's academic activities, relevant risks and the overall effectiveness of services in support of the University's academic endeavour.
- 1.2. To be responsible for developing and overseeing the University's strategic and operational intentions with regard to teaching, examining and research, and for any major issues of general policy affecting the academic life of the University and its development.
- 1.3. To ensure the effectiveness of the University's academic governance arrangements, the continuous improvement of the student experience, the setting and maintaining of standards, and the management of academic risks.

## **2. Functions**

### **2.1 The functions of Academic Board are:**

- a. to consider, approve and keep under review the University's academic strategy, aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, and monitor progress against academic strategic objectives;
- b. to hold strategic oversight of academic and student related policy and procedures (*including portfolio reviews*);
- c. to oversee the University's responses to external regulatory bodies, quality assurance and professional bodies;
- d. to approve, regulate and periodically review the scope and content of taught and research degree programmes, all diploma and certificate programmes and component courses, and to guide future curriculum development;
- e. to authorise the award of University of London degrees (apart from honorary degrees and fellowships, and emeritus positions), diplomas, certificates and other awards to persons who have fulfilled the conditions of award;
- f. to determine the regulations relating to the definition of University of London awards and the implementation thereof;
- g. to determine policies to regulate the admission of persons to programmes of study, and to prescribe the circumstances in which a student may be required or permitted to withdraw temporarily or permanently and either conditionally or unconditionally from all or any part of his or her programme of study;

- h. to monitor appointment, removal and suspension of all University of London examiners and to maintain an overview of the quality of University of London programmes;
- i. to assure, maintain and enhance the quality of the University's academic provision in teaching and research;
- j. to monitor and promote research (including monitoring research grants and activities of the University's Centres of Excellence), and to require reports on research from time to time;
- k. to monitor the University's approach to securing and promoting freedom of speech and academic freedom, and to regularly review the University's Code of Practice setting out the University's values relating to freedom of speech;
- l. to receive reports as appropriate from the Academic Board's subcommittees, any task and finish groups and areas, functions or individuals with relevant delegated responsibilities;
- m. to report or make recommendations as appropriate to the Collegiate Council on strategic matters of mutual interest or concern;
- n. The Academic Board is accountable to the Board of Trustees for continuing compliance with the Office for Students' ongoing conditions of registration relating to the academic life of the University.

## **2.2 Delegation of Functions**

In order to fulfil its responsibilities, the Academic Board will determine which of its functions to delegate to sub-committees, task and finish groups, area functions or individuals as appropriate.

## **3. Constitution**

### **3.1 The membership of the Academic Board shall include:**

### **3.2 Chair and Deputy Chair**

The Chair will be the Vice-Chancellor of the University. The Vice-Chancellor will appoint a Deputy Chair from the ex officio members.

### **3.2 Ex officio members**

- The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Engagement)
- The Librarian

### **3.3 Collegiate Council members**

- 3.3.1 Collegiate Council shall approve up to two members of the Collegiate Council, one of which will be a member of the Board of Trustees and will normally be the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, to be members of the Academic Board.
- 3.3.2 Appointed Collegiate Council members may normally hold office for a period of up to three years whereupon they may be reappointed for one further term of three years.

### **3.4 Student members**

- 3.4.1 Academic Board shall appoint two students of the University to its membership (one undergraduate and one postgraduate).
- 3.4.2 Student members shall normally serve on the Academic Board for a period of up to one year whereupon they may be reappointed for no more than one further consecutive term of up to one year.

### **3.5 Members of academic staff of the University**

- 3.5.1 Academic Board shall appoint up to five members of the academic staff of the University to its membership.
- 3.5.2 Members of academic staff shall normally serve on the Academic Board for a period of up to three years whereupon they may be reappointed for no more than one further consecutive term of three years.

### **3.6 Senior academic from a Federation Member**

- 3.6.1 The Academic Board shall appoint a senior academic from a Federation Member with leadership experience in one or more of the following areas: teaching and learning, research, international, student experience.
- 3.6.2 The senior academic from a Federation Member shall normally serve on the Academic Board for a period of up to three years whereupon they may be reappointed for no more than one further consecutive term of up to three years.

### **3.7 A Director or Deputy Director of Quality from a Federation Member**

- 3.7.1 The Academic Board shall appoint a Director or Deputy Director of Quality (or equivalent) from a Federation Member.
- 3.7.2 The Director or Deputy Director of Quality from a Federation Member shall normally serve on the Academic Board for a period of up to three years whereupon they may be reappointed for no more than one further consecutive term of up to three years.

### **3.8 University of London Worldwide Programme Directors**

- 3.8.1 The Board of Trustees shall appoint up to two Programme Directors involved in the delivery of a University of London Worldwide programme.
- 3.8.2 The Programme Directors shall normally serve on the Academic Board for a period of up to three years whereupon they may be reappointed for no more than one further consecutive term of up to three years.

## **B. Specific Procedures of the Academic Board**

### **4. Conduct of Business**

#### **4.1 Chair**

The Chair if present will preside at all meetings of the Academic Board. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair will preside. If both the Chair and the Deputy Chair are absent, the members shall appoint one of the members present to chair the meeting.

#### **4.2 Alternates**

Members of the Academic Board shall not be permitted to send an alternate or proxy in their place.

#### **4.3 Conflicts of Interest**

Members will be asked to declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest before the business of the meeting begins. Members may have to leave the meeting and abstain from a decision-making process if a conflict exists and it cannot be appropriately mitigated.

#### **4.4 Ordinary Meetings**

- The Academic Board shall normally meet formally no fewer than four times per year.
- Meetings of the Academic Board may be varied or cancelled by the Secretary to Academic Board but only at the request of the Chair of the Academic Board.
- Notice should be sent to members of the Academic Board normally no less than four working days before the meeting.

#### **4.5 Extraordinary Meetings**

- The Secretary, at the request of the Chair, or at the written request of at least four members of the Academic Board, shall summon an extraordinary meeting of the Academic Board.
- Notice shall be sent to members of the Academic Board normally no less than four working days before the meeting, stating the time, place and the agenda of the meeting.
- Notice of the meeting shall be sent electronically to an email address and/or by post to each member. The email and postal addresses used for any member shall be those notified by him/her to the Secretary.
- The accidental omission to notify any member of the Academic Board, or the non-receipt of notification by any member, shall not invalidate the meeting.

#### **4.6 Urgent Business**

The Chair may authorise the taking of action on behalf of the Academic Board on any matter being in the opinion of the Chair urgent (but not of sufficient importance to justify an extraordinary meeting of the Academic Board). Such action shall be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Board.

#### **4.7 Quorum**

- The quorum for a meeting of the Academic Board shall be 40% of members including at least two ex officio members.

- All or any members of the Academic Board may participate in a meeting by means of video or telephone conference or communication equipment which allows all participating in the meeting to hear each other. Such persons shall be counted as participating in the meeting and being in attendance for the purposes of the quorum.
- If a meeting ceases to be quorate at any time, formal decisions may not be taken. Any outstanding business of the meeting, if not urgent, shall be placed on the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the Academic Board. Any outstanding urgent business will be dealt with by the Chair in accordance with the provisions for dealing with urgent business, or by means of an extraordinary meeting, or by correspondence, as determined by the Chair. Any business transacted and decisions taken before the adjournment of the meeting became inquorate shall be valid.

#### **4.8 Voting**

- All members of the Academic Board have the right to vote. Officers in attendance and observers do not have the right to vote.
- If the view of the meeting is not clear and a vote is required, a recommendation shall be put to a vote and shall be declared approved if it receives a simple majority of votes cast. Voting shall normally be by a show of hands.
- Each member shall have one vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
- The Academic Board acts on the basis of collective responsibility. Members of the Academic Board are encouraged to express any differing views within the Academic Board's internal decision-making process.
- The Academic Board may conduct its business by correspondence and a proposal in writing, which has been sent to each member of the Academic Board, including by email, shall, if endorsed by a majority of members of the Academic Board, be as legitimate as if agreed at a formal meeting of the Academic Board.

#### **4.9 Rescinding Decisions**

A decision of the Academic Board may be rescinded or varied at a subsequent meeting of the Academic Board only if notice of the proposal to rescind or vary the decision has been given and if the subject matter of the decision (and any proposed variation) appears in the agenda and supporting papers of the meeting.

#### **4.10 Agenda**

- The agenda and supporting papers specifying the business to be transacted shall normally be sent to every member three working days before an ordinary meeting of the Academic Board; accidental omission to send an agenda and/or supporting papers to - or the non-receipt of them by - a member shall not invalidate a meeting.
- No business shall be transacted at a meeting other than that specified in the agenda paper except with the consent of the Academic Board, matters introduced by the Chair because in the Chair's opinion they are urgent and have arisen too late to be specified in the agenda paper.

- Any suggestions by members for items for the agenda should normally be received by the Secretary fourteen working days before the meeting. The agenda shall be determined by the Chair in consultation with the Secretary. The Secretary shall write to any member who suggests an item that is not accepted stating the reasons. The inclusion on the agenda of any items received at shorter notice will be at the discretion of the Chair.

#### **4.11 Confidentiality**

Exceptionally, papers for consideration by the Academic Board, and any associated minutes, may be subject to non-disclosure exemptions in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Such papers and any associated minutes will be designated as such, and their circulation restricted accordingly.

#### **4.12 Reserved Business**

The Chair may require particular members of the Academic Board or persons in attendance to withdraw from the meeting for the discussion of particular items, depending on the nature of the business to be discussed.

#### **4.13 Consultation with other bodies**

In exercising its functions, the Academic Board shall ensure it seeks appropriate information or advice from relevant individuals or bodies.

#### **4.14 Minutes**

Minutes of meetings of the Academic Board will be taken and will be submitted to the next ordinary meeting for approval. Discussion on minutes shall be confined to their accuracy.

#### **4.15 Documentation**

Approved minutes and related agendas and papers shall be retained by the Secretariat, and, normally not more than five years after the meeting to which they relate, they will be deposited in the archives of the University.

### **5. Appointments to the Academic Board**

5.1 Appointments to Academic Board will be made via a request for nominations and/or expressions of interest and followed by the consideration and then the recommendations of the Vice-Chancellor to the Academic Board.

5.2 The Chair may seek advice or further information or determine further process as they see fit to support their consideration.