

3.4 Academic Council

3.4.1 Overview

Effective September 1st, 2019, Academic Council will become one of ICD Business School's two main standing committees and its central academic deliberative and decision-making body. The council, composed of elected, appointed and *ex-officio* members, has delegated authority for the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of all academic matters at the college. The council has overall responsibility for assuring the quality of academic programmes delivered by ICD Business School.

In keeping with Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* (April 2016/QG1-V2), Academic Council has been developed and implemented to protect the integrity of academic processes and standards, guarantee its independence from undue 'commercial considerations', and to ensure that 'overall corporate decision-makers (...) do not exercise exclusive authority or undue influence over academic decision-making'. The council is responsible for academic quality assurance, for the purpose both of enhancement and accountability and is the key apparatus by which the college considers and determines 'appropriate responses' to 'the findings of internal and external evaluation and self-monitoring processes', where they pertain to the college's educational provision and related services. The constitution, functions, and composition of Academic Council at ICD Business School are partly informed by the Universities Act, 1997 (Part V).

3.4.2 Relationship with Governing Body and College Management Team

Academic Council and its subcommittees function independently of the college's Governing Body and college Management Team, having delegated authority for the governance of all academic matters. To further preserve its autonomy, the council also has as an external council member who – as part of their responsibilities – must safeguard the authority and independence of Academic Council *Vis a Vis* the college's college Management Team and Governing Body.

The council is responsible for reporting and making recommendations, as appropriate, to Governing Body. Its work is reported to Governing Body principally via its minutes and an annual report prepared after its last (third) annual meeting. Though it is the responsibility of Academic Council to review proposals for the establishment of new programme and related services, all matters relating to

resource allocation, the authorisation of expenditure, procurement, and human resources are subject to the approval of Governing Body and will entail consultations with the college Management Team. Academic Council may also seek approval from Governing Body for the formation of new sub-committees as it thinks proper to assist it in the performance of its functions.

3.4.3 Functions

Academic Council shall control the academic affairs and governance of ICD Business School. Its functions include:

1. The planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the college's educational work
2. The protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the college
3. Assuring the quality of awards for which the college has been granted validation and maintaining standards in accordance with core QQI policies and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
4. Actively engage learner voice by providing a forum where student representatives (the ICD graduate who is a member of Academic Council and the current learner representative) can express their views on academic matters and provide feedback on matters relating to the teaching, learning, and assessment environment and strategies at ICD
5. To propose, approve, and develop programmes of study and make recommendations to Governing Body for their effective implementation.
6. Evaluating and approving any substantive changes to existing modules (i.e. weighting, assessment strategy) and the creation of new modules
7. To delegate responsibility for new and existing programme review and development work to the programme development subcommittee
8. Appoint external examiners, subject to the approval of Governing Body
9. The periodic monitoring and evaluation of the college's educational programmes and their effectiveness, including the analysis of learner enrolment data, attrition, progression and completion rates, internal and external stakeholder feedback, and overall learner achievement.
10. To propose meaningful interventions and plans of action to drive improvement in the college's academic provision and in any other areas that fall under its remit (subject to the authorisation of Governing Body where such actions would incur additional resource use for the college)

11. Identify risks pertaining to academic affairs including learner achievement, retention, support, and welfare and communicate these to Governing Body, making recommendations for their management and mitigation where appropriate using the ICD risk register template (see Policy on Risk)
12. To coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of learner supports, including English-language supports, pastoral care, and library and LMS resources.
13. To evaluate and approve - where appropriate – amendments to modules and programmes of learning proposed by academic staff
14. Overseeing the cyclical review of the college’s academic programmes and recommending appropriate modifications and improvements to their structure and content
15. To make recommendations regarding the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of learners generally
16. To monitor, evaluate, and propose changes to the college’s academic regulations including the conduct of examinations and assessment, academic integrity and procedures for appeal, and the moderation and verification of results
17. To receive and endorse the reports of its subcommittees- including programme boards – and, where necessary, to guide and direct their work, and seek clarification on their decisions
18. To evaluate and propose enhancements to the college’s teaching, learning and assessment strategies and to identify, define, and promote pedagogical best practice.
19. To evaluate and support the college’s use of educational technologies for the enhancement, support, assessment, and delivery of learning.
20. To assess the adequacy of, and make recommendations to Governing Body regarding, the college’s resources (including analysis of staffing, technological, and physical resources) for educational provision
21. To assess the adequacy of, and make recommendations to Governing Body regarding, the college’s resources for academic staff performance management and development
22. To make recommendations to the Governing Body on the financial and non-financial supports and programmes available for staff research and staff development
23. To facilitate the meaningful engagement of learner voice on Academic Council and to evaluate and respond to learner feedback questionnaires
24. Subject to the approval of Governing Body, to establish such and so many sub-committees as it thinks proper to assist in the performance of its functions.

- 25.** The council shall undertake annual evaluation of its own performance and that of its constituent subcommittees. The council chair will be responsible for acting on the results of this performance evaluation and making relevant recommendations to Governing Body.
- 26.** Receiving, considering, and deciding upon all proposals regarding improving or altering information shared publicly about programmes, ICD's quality assurance procedures and infrastructure, and related activities to ensure information published is clear, accurate, objective, and up to date to ensure compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012, Revised 2014) and to ensure a culture of transparently informing all enrolled learners and prospective learners
- 27.** Reporting to Governing Body on all decisions regarding improving or altering information shared publicly about programmes, ICD's quality assurance procedures and infrastructure, and related activities to ensure information published is clear, accurate, objective, and up to date to ensure compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012, Revised 2014) and to ensure a culture of transparently informing all enrolled learners and prospective learners

3.4.4 Composition & Membership

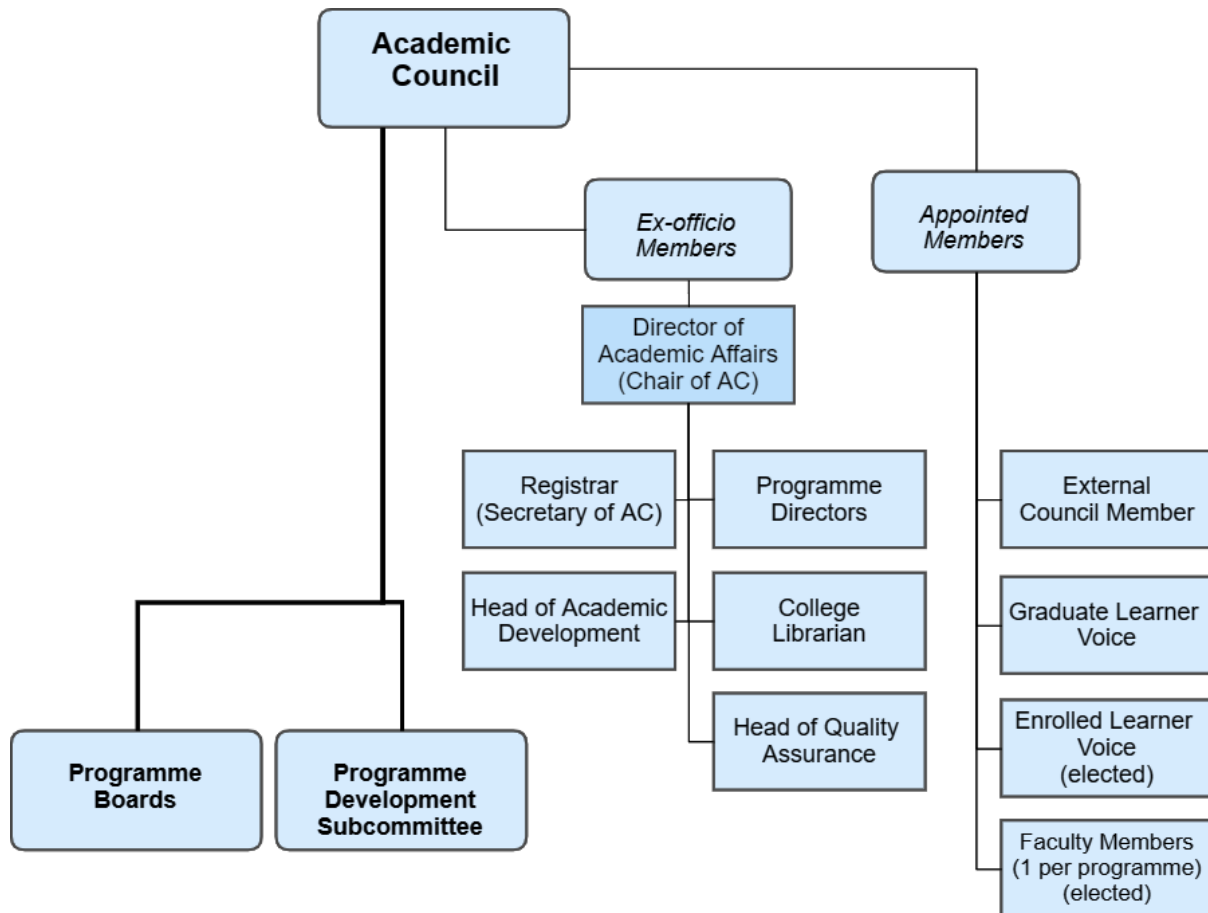


Figure 3.4.4: Academic Council composition: membership & subcommittees

Ex Officio Membership

Academic Council is constituted by *ex officio* members who sit on council by nature of their function within the college. Specifically, this includes:

1. The Council Chair (Director of Academic Affairs)
2. The Council Secretary (The Registrar)
3. The Head of Academic Development
4. The Head of Quality Assurance
5. Programme Director, BA (Hons) In Business Studies
6. Programme Director, BA (Hons) In Accounting & Finance
7. Programme Director, MA in Accounting & Finance
8. The College Librarian

Elected Membership of Academic Council

The council also has the following *elected* members:

1. Lecturer Representative for BA Hons in Business Studies Programme
2. Lecturer Representative for BA Hons in Accounting & Finance Programme
3. Lecturer Representative for MA in Accounting & Finance Programme
4. One Enrolled Learner Voice (current learner representative)

All new future programmes will also require the addition of a lecturer representative for that programme to Academic Council.

The election of lecturer representatives occurs as follows:

- i. Lecturers on a programme (the Programme Board) are requested (e.g. via email) to nominate themselves to be considered for membership of Academic Council as a lecturer representative for a specific programme
- ii. When all nominees are specified, all lecturer members of the Programme Board have an opportunity to vote on their lecturer representative at a Programme Board meeting via private ballot
- iii. Votes are taken and counted by the Programme Director and one lecturer on the programme, who is not a candidate for election
- iv. If only one lecturer on a programme nominates themselves, then that individual is automatically elected

Elected lecturer representatives hold office for a period of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment, depending on nomination and voting.

The Enrolled Learner Voice (current learner representative) member of the Academic Council is elected by the Student Representative Committee (SRC):

- i. The SRC will elect one current SRC member to the Academic Council
- ii. The SRC member of Academic Council will hold a term of office of one year and is available for re-election
- iii. The SRC member of Academic Council must be a currently enrolled learner

- iv. The SRC member of Academic Council will represent the views of currently enrolled learners at Academic Council
- v. The SRC member of Academic Council will be a full member and will be invited to attend all meetings
- vi. The SRC member of Academic Council will act as a key communication messenger between the current student body and the most senior academic decision-making committee at the college assisting in closing the communications loop

Appointed Membership

- 1. The External Council Member (who is also a member of Governing Body)
- 2. The Graduate Learner Voice (ICD Graduate) on Academic Council

The External Member of Academic Council shall be chosen based on the suitability of the candidate according to the match between their skillset and the terms of reference specified in section 3.4.13. The External Member of Academic Council will be invited to all meetings of Academic Council.

One Graduate Learner Voice: There will be one Graduate Learner Voice, an ICD graduate (who graduated within the two years previous to the date of appointment), who will represent a learner perspective in all deliberations and decision making at the highest level of governance. The ICD graduate will sit on Governing Body and Academic Council for a maximum term of one year. The learner voice member of Governing Body and Academic Council will be the same person to ensure a consistent communication channel between these two committees, providing a learner perspective in all decision making. The learner voice member of Academic Council will be invited to all meetings of Academic Council and Governing Body.

3.4.5 Meetings & Agenda

Schedule

A schedule of meetings shall be agreed before the commencement of each academic year. This schedule is the responsibility of the council chair and secretary and will be circulated to members both via email, and via the college's online staff 'document store' (on the Moodle learning management system).

Frequency

Not less than three ordinary meetings shall be held in each academic year:

9. Prior to the commencement of the 'Autumn/Winter' semester
10. At the beginning of new calendar year, prior to the commencement of the 'Spring/Summer' semester
11. After the conclusion of the college's end-of-year exam board (during the summer)

Agenda & council proceedings

The agenda shall be circulated a minimum of five working days prior to each respective meeting. All supplemental documentation relevant to the meeting will be available a minimum of three working days prior. Matters tabled under AOB shall be for discussion and noting only. The first *agendum* for each meeting shall always be 'approval of the agenda'.

12. The council chair and council secretary will be responsible for the preparation and circulation of its agenda.
13. Minutes will be taken by the secretary, who is also responsible for their storage and dissemination to all members and staff.
14. The chair shall be responsible for managing the council's business and acting as its facilitator and guide.
15. Any staff member may propose an item or motion for inclusion in the agenda using the 'agenda item submission form', subject to the approval of the chair (see below).

16. A document may be tabled at a meeting of council provided it relates to one of the approved agenda items and provided that a majority (more than half) of members agree to it being tabled
17. Speakers will always address the chair and all members will remain silent when another member is speaking

3.4.6 Reporting

Academic Council shall prepare an annual report containing a summary of all its activities and meetings, to be noted by Governing Body. This shall be made available to all staff via the college document store (Moodle). A record of all minutes will also be kept on the college's document store for all staff to access.

Academic Council's annual report will document the following:

18. Membership of council, including any changes
19. A record of ordinary and extraordinary meetings both for council and for its subcommittees
20. A summary of business transacted by council and its subcommittees
21. Reports on programme validations or reviews, if applicable
22. A record of any evaluations/approvals of new modules or changes to existing modules (undertaken by the programme development subcommittee)
23. Noting of the annual reports of all subcommittees (Programme Development Subcommittee; Programme Boards), and the college librarian, Registrar, and external examiner(s), and a summary of any significant issues identified by subcommittees, subsequent discussions at council, and any motions or action plans initiated as a result
24. Any other significant proposals, motions, or resolutions arising from the meetings of council and its subcommittees
25. A record of newly appointed academic staff or external examiners, if applicable
26. An analysis of all resources required and used in the delivery of education at ICD (to include analysis of staffing, physical, and technological resources)

The council will also receive and note annual reports from each of its subcommittees, the college examination board, programmes boards, college librarian, and Student Representative Committee. An official response to each report will be conveyed via the respective committees' secretary.

3.4.7 Quoracy

A quorum of the Academic Council shall comprise a minimum of 40% of the members, including the chair and secretary. Where the council chair is unable to attend, meetings shall be chaired by the Head of Academic Development. In their absence, responsibility will fall to the Head of Quality Assurance.

3.4.8 The Council Chair

The chair shall be responsible for:

27. Establishing meeting agendas in collaboration with the council secretary
28. Providing leadership and setting the tone and standard for council conduct
29. Managing the council's business and acting as its facilitator and guide
30. Ensuring that the council's business is undertaken in accordance with the council's terms of reference and the college's governing principles
31. Making sure that each meeting is planned effectively and that its agenda is dealt with fully and in an orderly, efficient manner
32. Encouraging a culture of openness, engaging all council members', and ensuring that their views are heard and discussed
33. Ensuring that the Learner Voice Members are meaningfully included in the work and decision-making of Academic Council
34. Making sure that all voting follows procedure and that clear decisions are taken and documented
35. Delegating work that may be more effectively undertaken by the council's subcommittees
36. Ensuring that agreed actions are communicated to relevant stakeholders and effectively followed up in line with council decisions
37. Using their casting vote, where appropriate, to break deadlocks
38. Inducting new council members and succession planning
39. Overseeing periodic self-evaluation and performance appraisal of Academic Council
40. Alongside the secretary, preparing the council's annual report and conveying important matters/emerging issues to the college Management Team and Governing Body
41. Working with the external council member to preserve the independence of Academic Council

3.4.9 The Council Secretary

The secretary is responsible for:

42. taking, storing and disseminating accurate minutes for each council meeting

43. assisting the chair in developing the agenda for each meeting
44. ensuring that the notice of meeting is given, and that copies of the agenda be prepared
45. recording the names of those present, and conveying and recording apologies from absent members
46. circulating all relevant information/documentation to council members (including agendas and meeting schedules) in a timely manner
47. processing agenda item submission forms from staff members
48. making sure that any documentation or information requested at the last meeting is available or explaining why it is not
49. obtaining the chairperson's signature for approved minutes
50. reporting on action or matters arising out of the previous meeting and reading any important correspondence that has been received
51. reminding the chair if an agenda item has been overlooked
52. sending a reminder notice of each decision requiring action to the relevant person

3.4.10 Special meetings

The chair may call special meetings of Academic Council and its subcommittees as are deemed necessary to execute its business. These are subject to the normal rules of quorum.

3.4.11 Procedures for Motions, Amendments and Voting

53. A 'motion' is a proposal which is put forward and a 'resolution' is the acceptance of a motion by members. A motion requires a proposer and a seconder, except when it is initiated by the chair.
54. For an amendment to a motion to be put, it requires a proposer and a seconder. An amendment will be put to a vote before the original motion.
55. If an amendment is not carried, the Chair will put the motion in its original form to a vote. If an amendment is carried, the Chair will put the amended motion to the meeting. Before a motion or an amendment is put to a vote, the Secretary will read out the text to be voted on.
56. Where a motion has been put to the meeting, the Chair will ask the Council if it assents, and the decision will normally be by acclamation. Where there appears to be a division, the Chair will

call for a vote; such a vote may also be requested by any member. The results of voting will be counted and recorded by the Secretary.

57. All members in attendance at the meeting are entitled to vote on matters coming before the Council. At all meetings, the chair shall also have a casting vote (where it is necessary to break a deadlock).
58. The number of votes for and against a motion, and the number of abstentions, will be recorded in the minutes.
59. A member may raise a 'point of order' if they wish to interrupt the proceedings of a meeting (e.g. to raise concerns about procedure or seek clarification on any matter). The chair will determine whether the point of order is admissible.
60. A member may also propose a closure motion, if seconded.
61. Members may request for an emergency item to be inscribed on the agenda, but only if they receive the assenting votes of at least two thirds of council members.
62. The final agenda in any council meeting – 'any other business' – will allow members to flag up items for discussion at subsequently scheduled meetings, or elsewhere.

3.4.12 Sub-committees of the council

Taking into account the principles of context and proportionality ICD – as a small, independent provider – will convene its Academic Council subcommittees on an *ad hoc* basis, as needs arise. Each of these sub-committees must report their activities to Academic Council via the minutes of their meetings. Sub-committees will also prepare an annual report to be discussed at Academic Council. The Academic Council secretary shall be responsible for convening subcommittee meetings, collating their minutes, and facilitating the effective flow of information and business between respective committees and Academic Council. Academic Council's subcommittees comprise:

1. Programme Boards (one per programme)
2. Programme Development Subcommittee

Programme Boards

Programme boards are subcommittees of – and report annually to – Academic Council. Annual reports shall be submitted in the Autumn/Winter of each year (prior to Academic Council’s second meeting at that beginning of each calendar year). See section 3.9 of the ICD QA Policy for more information.

Programme Development Subcommittee

The programme development committee shares responsibility with Academic Council for existing curriculum development *and* the development of new academic programmes and modules. It oversees the process of periodic programme review, the preparation of programmes for validation and revalidation, and the approval of proposed major and minor changes to existing course offerings. It is constituted as an *ad-hoc* committee, convening for a specified period at the direction of Academic Council in order to undertake a defined activity or task. Its membership shall vary but will typically comprise the Head of Academic Development, a programme director, and at least two members of a relevant programme board. The Head of Academic Development shall fulfil the functions of chair and secretary and is responsible for reporting to Academic Council on the work of the subcommittee. See section 3.8 of the ICD QA Policy for more information.

3.4.13 The External Academic Council & Governing Body Member

The role of the external council member has been created to ensure that Academic Council has sufficient independence to discharge its obligations and responsibilities effectively. The External Academic Council Member will also be a member of Governing Body to ensure academic considerations are at the forefront of deliberations and strategy within ICD's overall governance system. In keeping with the term of office of External Governing Body members, the External member of Academic Council and Governing Body will hold a term of office not exceeding five years. This five-year term of office is to maintain consistency with the standard term of office for (non-learner) external members of Governing Body. The five-year term of office for Governing Body members is based on the specification provided in the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992, Revised 2018 (Law Reform Commission, 2018). The External member of Academic Council and Governing Body must have experience in a teaching/lecturing role.

The External Academic Council and Governing Body member has the following duties and responsibilities:

63. To attend Academic Council meetings and be apprised of all relevant minutes, agendas, and other circulated documents.
64. To attend Governing Body meetings and be apprised of all relevant minutes, agendas, and other circulated documents.
65. To provide independent oversight and monitoring of the activities of Academic Council.
66. To provide independent oversight and monitoring of the activities of Governing Body.
67. To work with the chair of Academic Council to facilitate open discussion and debate at council and promote a culture of probity, integrity, and quality-assured education at ICD Business School.
68. To work with the chair of Governing Body to facilitate open discussion and debate at Governing Body and promote a culture of probity, integrity, and quality-assured education at ICD Business School.
69. To act as an independent voice on Academic Council, offer critique, and provide strategic guidance on all academic matters including:
 - teaching, learning, and assessment
 - programme development
 - quality enhancement
 - academic standards
 - academic integrity

- learner and programme performance
- pedagogy, scholarship and staff development
- learner admission and retention
- any other academic matters impacting the learner experience

70. To act as an independent voice on Governing Body ensuring a reliable and consistent reporting mechanism from Academic Council, offering critique to Governing Body, and providing strategic guidance on all matters

71. To ensure ICD Business School's compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements that pertain to the remit of Academic Council and Governing Body.

72. To safeguard the authority and independence of Academic Council *vis a vis* the college Management Team and Governing Body.

73. To promote a system of rigorous self-monitoring at ICD, to ensure continuous improvement of the college's educational provision and related services

Person Specification for Selection of External Member of Academic Council and Governing Body (shared role):

- i. Must have academic qualifications and experience in a business and/or accounting discipline
- ii. Must have extensive senior experience in a business and/or accounting academic role
- iii. Must have extensive lecturing experience in a business and/or accounting role
- iv. Must have experience in the design and delivery of programmes
- v. Must have experience in a role related to academic quality assurance

3.4.14 Self-evaluation and review

In keeping with the college's commitment to promoting a culture of continuous and rigorous self-monitoring and evaluation, Academic Council shall conduct an internal annual self-evaluation out of which will be developed an action plan for improvement. This process shall be overseen by the council chair and external council member, who will make relevant recommendations for the revision of relevant processes and procedures, subject to approval by Governing Body.

3.4.15 Key forms and procedures

College staff can propose an item for inclusion on the Academic Council's agenda. The author of a submission must complete the 'agenda item submission form' and submit it for consideration by the secretary at least two weeks prior to a regularly scheduled council meeting. Staff who are not members of Academic Council may have an agenda item forwarded to Academic Council with the approval of their programme director, or another 'sponsor' who sits on Academic Council. Submissions will be reviewed by the secretary and by the council chair, who will rule on the appropriateness of items for inclusion in the agenda.



3.4.16 Academic Council Agenda Item Submission Form

(please submit to the council secretary, for approval by the chair)

Meeting date	<i>The scheduled meeting at which you would like the item discussed/decided on. Remember to submit your request in a timely manner so that the appropriate level of review may be undertaken (it is recommended that submissions are made no later than two weeks before a regularly scheduled council meeting).</i>	
Author	<i>Name of person or group submitting agenda item</i>	
Title/Short description of agenda item	<i>Concise, one-line description for inclusion on agenda</i>	
Motion	<i>Wording of motion, if applicable</i>	
Designated Sponsor/motion seconder	<i>Member/other member of Academic Council who will speak to item, if applicable</i>	
Date submitted	<i>Date of proposal submission</i>	
Description/ Explanation	<p><i>74. A full description and explanation of the proposed agenda item</i></p> <p><i>75. please provide a clear and concise explanation of that item the council is being asked to consider</i></p> <p><i>76. please detail all relevant facts, explain the need for action, and furnish sufficient background information and context</i></p> <p><i>77. Your proposal must be sufficiently clear to be easily understood by all council members</i></p> <p><i>78. Outline what you consider to be the expected results of implementation, if the item is adopted and approved by council</i></p> <p><i>79. Agenda items for specially called meetings must include an explanation of the urgency for the council's consideration of and action on the matter</i></p>	
Purpose/council action being sought.	<i>For communication/noting/information - no decision is required</i>	
	<i>For decision en bloc – decision required, but no discussion</i>	
	<i>For discussion and decision – item to be discussed and decision made</i>	
Supporting documentation	<i>List and summarise any supporting documentation attached to this application. All documents must be numbered (i.e. '1', '2', or 'i', 'ii'). All documents must be numbered and circulated at least one week before each Academic Council. To allow time to facilitate this, please send all documentation to the council secretary as early as possible.</i>	

REFERENCES

QQI (2016a) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. Quality and Qualifications Ireland, Dublin.

Available from:

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012, Revised 2014)

Government of Ireland. Available from:

[https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Qualifications%20and%20Quality%20Assurance%20\(Education%20and%20Training\)%20Act%202012%20-%20Revised%20November%202014.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Qualifications%20and%20Quality%20Assurance%20(Education%20and%20Training)%20Act%202012%20-%20Revised%20November%202014.pdf)