
Academic Board Terms of Reference

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Role

The Academic Board is the peak academic body of the Engineering Institute of Technology (EIT), and is responsible for establishing and maintaining the highest standards of teaching and learning in the Institution. It provides independent, authoritative advice to the Governing Board on all higher education academic matters.

There is an important separation of powers between the Governance Board and the Academic Board. Whilst the Academic Board reports to the Governance Board, it has been created by delegation from the Governance Board with the authority to govern EIT with regard to higher education academic matters.

Functions and Responsibilities

1. General functions

- To achieve effective academic oversight of the highest quality in higher education teaching, learning and scholarship and in so doing, to safeguard the academic freedom of the Institution.
- To set and monitor institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes.
- To establish and maintain academic leadership at an institutional level, consistent with the types and levels of higher education offered
- To communicate with the academic community of EIT, the Board of Studies, the Course Advisory Committee and other similar organisational units.
- To maintain and promote regular links with relevant professional organisations and industry groups to ensure that the Institution's academic courses maintain industry relevance and create work-ready graduates.

- To respond to any matters referred to it by the Governance Board or any academic committees.
 - To review, guide and encourage the current nascent research programs especially in the remote engineering and online lab areas.
2. Advisory functions
- To provide competent advice to the EIT Governance Board and management on academic matters, including advice on academic outcomes, policies and practices.
 - To advise the Governance Board on academic aspects in the Institution's Business Plan and Strategic Plan (including risk management).
 - To maintain academic standards in higher education courses in the Institution.
 - To advise the Governance Board on any academic matters that it considers to be of strategic importance.
3. Specific functions
- Monitoring and initiating action to improve performance against institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes.
 - Evaluating the effectiveness of institutional monitoring, review and improvement of academic activities.
 - To obtain and review reports from the Board of Studies, and instigate all necessary actions to ensure that high standards of delivery of courses are maintained across the Institution.
 - To initiate the development of new higher education courses for approval by the Governance Board.
 - To delegate responsibility for developing new higher education courses to a Course Advisory Committee as required.
 - Confirming that delegations of academic authority are implemented.
 - Critically scrutinising and approving new courses of study and their associated qualifications, as well as major changes in existing higher education courses, and their subsequent submission to the external regulatory authority for accreditation.
 - Develop, monitor and review academic policies and their effectiveness.
 - To approve academic matters relating to human resource management, the conditions of appointment and employment of academic staff, including position descriptions and staff qualifications.
 - Maintaining oversight of academic integrity, including monitoring of potential risks.
 - To monitor the admission criteria for students in higher education courses in the Institution.
 - Critically evaluating the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations.
 - To promote and support the development of on-line and blended delivery methods (especially remote and virtual labs) to allow students from any location to effectively complete the courses provided and to further develop life-long learning skills.
 - To annually review information gained from surveys of students and staff, recommendations from the Dean and academic staff that has been reported to the Board of Studies.

- Monitoring and reporting to the EIT Governance Board on the quality of teaching, learning and scholarship via regular reports (comprising the detailed minutes of each meeting) to the Governance Board after each Academic Board meeting. To consider and advise on matters referred to it by the Governance Board.
- To consider and approve marks and grades for all higher education courses as per recommendations from the Board of Studies and before final release to the students.
- To recommend the conferral of awards for graduation by students in higher education courses within the Institution.
- To exercise oversight of assessment standards and practices as they are implemented within the Institution.
- To provide advice concerning changes and requirements as they occur in the higher education sector.
- To act as the final appeal body on all academic grievances.
- To benchmark key activities against those of other higher education providers in Australia and internationally, where relevant.
- To monitor academic staff development and scholarship activities in the Institution, and to ensure academic staff qualifications are appropriate.
- To monitor current activities and research related to on-campus and online pedagogical models to reduce student attrition and to improve 'connectivity' and 'presence' of students to EIT.
- Giving students the opportunity to participate in academic governance.

Membership

The members of the Academic Board shall be appointed by the Governance Board. The members are selected for their academic and professional practice experience and valuable scholarly contribution in a variety of academic arenas in society.

The membership will consist of:

- An independent Chair (1)
- Independent representatives who have higher education experience (1-2)
- Engineering industry representatives or representative with extensive professional practice experience (1-2)
- A representative with online experience (1)
- Dean of EIT (ex-officio) (1)
- EIT Senior Academic teaching representative (1)
- Representative from EIT Executive Management (1)

The number of members on the Academic Board shall be no more than seven and no less than three. The Chair will be an independent member with significant higher education experience, including academic governance.

Members will serve terms of three (3) years. They may seek re-appointment at the end of each term.

If a casual vacancy occurs, a replacement will be nominated by the Chair from the constituency in which the vacancy occurred. A person appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office for the remainder of the term of office of the person's predecessor.

Members of each Board or Committee appointed or overseen by the Governance Board or

Academic Board may be appointed and removed by the Board/Committee Chairperson, with the approval of the Governance Board.

The dismissal of a member for misconduct is based on the following three-step procedure which includes:

- First formal notice in writing
- Second formal notice in writing
- Notice of dismissal from duties.

For issues that are considered minor, a conversation with the member may be appropriate; however this will not be considered part of the formal disciplinary action (although it may be referred to in a later action).

Written notice will include details of the issue and, where feasible, evidence. In a case where the disciplinary measure has been instigated by a complaint, it may be appropriate to include a copy (with identification removed) or extract of this complaint.

Further disciplinary actions, such as a suspension of duties for a period of time, may also be appropriate. In such cases these actions will be included with the formal notice in writing. Every effort will be taken to ensure that notice of a disciplinary measure, whether formal or informal, will be given at an appropriate time. Notice of a disciplinary measure will be given by a designated Governance Board member.

The member will be provided with an opportunity to lodge an appeal against the action. This may take the form of a meeting with the appropriate Governance Board member or a representation in person and/or in writing to the Board. The member may bring a representative to any such meeting.

Should an appeal result in a change of the disciplinary action, or removal of it, this will be confirmed in writing to the member.

Conduct which may lead to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:

- Failing to follow the existing rules of conduct
- Rudeness or hostility towards other members
- Poor timekeeping, unreliability, negligence and disinterest
- Publicly bringing the name of EIT into disrepute
- Falsifications of any of EIT's records for personal gain
- Gaining a criminal record
- Commercial misrepresentation of EIT.

A list of current members of the Academic Board is provided in '*EIT Organisational Structure – Personnel*'.

Meetings

The Academic Board will normally meet every quarter, at a time and venue to be decided by the Chair and members of the Academic Board. If the geographical spread of members precludes meeting physically, then synchronous conferencing (telephone) facilities may be used.



The Executive Officer for the Academic Board will be responsible for the provision of executive and organisational support for the work of the Academic Board.

The secretariat will be the Accreditation Manager.

Decisions of the Academic Board are recorded in the minutes of their meetings. Minutes of each meeting are confirmed at a subsequent meeting.

The Dean or any shareholder of the EIT (or any associated company) or any member of the Governance Board is disqualified from voting; but can contribute to the discussions.

In the event of a dispute between the Academic and Governance Boards it is vital that the Academic Board is accorded full independence for academic issues requiring decision making. Should a dispute arise that warrants adjudication the following process will be adhered to: The Chair of both Boards and a mutually agreed academic from a Western Australian university will be selected to make a decision. Similar situations in the future will use decisions modelled here as a precedent.

Reporting

The Academic Board shall provide a report to the Governance Board after each meeting by making its minutes available.

Standing Committees

The Academic Board can form Standing Committees and Working Parties as required to service key areas in its remit.

Standing Orders

Meetings are in accordance with the Standing Orders outlined in Appendix 1.

Review

3 years after commencement. The Academic Board will provide an annual report on its performance to the Governance Board.

Appendix 1: Standing Orders

Convening of meetings

1. The Academic Board shall meet:

- Every quarter at times to be decided by EIT which are suitable to a majority of members. When specially called, at the direction of the Governance Board or the Chair of the Academic Board
- When specially called, upon receipt from a majority of members of the Academic Board of a written request containing a description of the business to be discussed.

2. The notice of meeting and a copy of the business papers shall be circulated to each member normally at least five clear working days before the meeting. The Chair may permit additional business to be tabled at the meeting.

3. Where urgent action is required between scheduled meetings of the Academic Board, the Chair of the Board may act on behalf of the Board, but will report all such actions to the next scheduled meeting of the Board. Non-urgent items between scheduled meetings may also be dealt with by signed resolution by all members of the Academic Board (or a majority where all members aren't available).

4. Any notice of motion, report or other business must be submitted in writing seven (7) clear working days before the meeting. Matters submitted after this time may be accepted at the discretion of the Chair.

5. If the Chair is of the opinion that there is insufficient business to warrant holding a normal meeting, the Chair may cancel the meeting and inform members normally at least three (3) days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

6. If after fifteen minutes of the scheduled starting time, a quorum is not present, the Chair may exercise discretion and allow the meeting to proceed, but any decisions from that meeting shall be confirmed by signed resolution by all members of the Board (or a majority where all members aren't available).

Order of Business

The normal order of business at each ordinary meeting shall be:

- Welcome and confirmation of agenda items
- Confirmation of the minutes after any amendments
- Business arising from the minutes
- Correspondence
- Report from the Dean
- Reports from Officers
- Reports from the Standing Committees and other working groups of the Academic Board
- Motions for which notice has been given
- Other business
- Confirmation of next meeting date and time.

Rules of Debate

Unless ruled otherwise by the Chair or resolved by the Academic Board, the Academic Board will conduct its business in committee as follows:

- A member may speak more than once on any matter at the discretion of the Chair
- The proposer of a motion can give it in writing, but may explain its sense orally
- Debate shall occur only on a formal motion before the Chair, or an amendment to such a motion. Any such motion or amendment shall be submitted in writing to the Chair but may be seconded orally.
- The Chair may participate in debate before the right of reply has been exercised
- The mover of a motion, but not an amendment, shall have the right of reply. This right of reply normally closes the debate.
- The Chair will put any motion or amendment by show of hands or ballot once they are of the opinion that it has been discussed fully.
- No member may speak to a motion, except to raise a point of order, after it has been put by the Chair and the show of hands or ballot has been taken.
- In the absence of a member who has given notice of motion, a motion shall lapse unless another member present is prepared to move it
- A motion shall be amended or withdrawn by the mover with the consent of the meeting
- Any motion or amendment not seconded shall not be debated, except for a motion from the Chair.
- An amendment that is a direct negative of the motion shall not be allowed
- Only one amendment may normally be accepted at one time
- If an amendment is carried, an amendment which is substantially the same as the original motion is out of order
- If an amendment is defeated, an amendment that is substantially the same as the original motion is out of order

The Chair

The Chair shall:

- Conduct meetings of the Academic Board in the manner indicated by the Standing Orders and give all members present an opportunity to speak and vote on the business of the meeting
- Take care that the sense of the meeting is properly followed in regard to the business before the meeting
- Put motions and amendments to the vote and report the result of the vote
- Maintain order in the discussions and debate of motions and amendments
- Refuse to accept motions and amendments which are not expressed clearly
- Not refuse any amendments that are presented in proper form and relate to the motion under discussion
- Not adjourn a meeting to prevent it from coming to a decision
- Exercise discretion in all matters not elsewhere covered in these standing orders.
- Have the right to attend meetings of any Standing Committees, Board of Studies, sub-committees and Working Parties with speaking rights at each.

Quorum

A quorum will be a minimum of half the appointed members plus 1. In the case of a tied vote, the Chair has the casting vote. See point 6 above in the 'Convening of Meetings' section re non-quorate meeting procedure.

The Minutes

The Minutes of all meetings will be recorded accurately and distributed to members normally within two (2) weeks of the specific meeting

The Minutes will normally record the following details from each meeting:

- the date, time and place of the meeting
- the nature of the meeting – ordinary, adjourned or special meeting
- the names of the Chair, members present, apologies and any persons invited to the meeting
- a summary of the business conducted, including motions and amendments put, together with the result of each vote
- the date, time and place for the next meeting.

The Minutes of each meeting shall be submitted to the following meeting for confirmation in terms of their accuracy. Any corrections must be agreed by the meeting before the Minutes are confirmed.

Conduct of Members

A member shall:

- speak only to the matter before the Academic Board
- not make offensive statements
- obey the Chair on questions of order during the meeting
- not disclose how other members have voted on specific motions or amendments
- Disclose to the Chair any potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest and normally vacate the meeting when any matter relating to them personally is under consideration by the meeting.
- Not release to the general public or any forms of the media any specific information concerning the business of the Academic Board.
- Observe the '*Statement of Principles for Members of the Academic Board*' below.

Statement of Principles for Members of the Academic Board

A member of the Academic Board may not, without the approval of the Chair, discuss with or disclose to a person not a member of the Academic Board:

- Any matter listed as confidential on the business papers or in the Minutes of the Academic Board
- Any personal matter affecting the individual
- Any business negotiation or other financial matter which might allow a person to profit
- Any matter concerning the promotion of another member of EIT
- Any proposal that any person will be granted an honorary degree



- Other matters which the Board or the Chair may decide are sensitive to the image, reputation or the interests of EIT.

Amendment of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders may be amended by a motion which has been presented with due notice to all members. An absolute majority of members is required for these orders to be changed.

Extended Application of Standing Orders.

Boards of Studies and Standing Committees of the Academic Board will normally use these Standing Orders to guide their proceedings.