

ACADEMIC BOARD - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Policy/Document Approval Body:	Governance Board
Date Created:	28 August 2013
Policy Custodian:	Dean of Engineering
Policy Contact:	Accreditation & Compliance Manager
File Location:	W:\Data - ALL.Standard\Policies and Procedures\EIT Policies and Procedures
Location on EIT website:	http://www.eit.edu.au/organisation-policies
Review Period:	Three years from commencement
Revision No:	8
Date of Revision:	9 August 2021
Date Approved:	7 October 2021
Date Commenced:	14 October 2021

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 at EIT. EIT's Governance Board has delegated responsibility for all academic matters to the Academic Board for both higher education and vocational courses. The Academic Board is to operate independently of the corporate governance of EIT to ensure academic integrity and to maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning. The Academic Board may further delegate functions to another body or person to assist with fulfilling its role, which has been approved by EIT's Governance Board.

The Academic Board is responsible for academic oversight of EIT's higher education and vocational courses and provides authoritative advice to EIT's Governance Board on all academic matters. Its key objective is to establish and maintain the quality of accredited courses and all associated academic matters.

The Academic Board reports to the Governance Board on all academic matters under its authority and any other matters referred to it by the Governance Board from time to time.

Functions and Responsibilities

The Academic Board reports to the EIT Governance Board and is responsible for:

- Effective academic oversight and maintenance of the highest quality of education and training, to safeguard the academic freedom of EIT.
- Establishing and monitoring delegations of academic authority.
- Maintaining oversight of academic integrity, assessment standards and processes, including monitoring of potential risks.

- Initiating the development of new higher education courses by the Course Advisory Committee; review of existing higher education courses, including major changes; endorsement and submission to the Governance Board for final approval and subsequent submission to TEQSA for higher education courses.
- Regular review, endorsement and quality assurance of current courses for submission to TEQSA and TACWA for renewal of course accreditation and/or provider registration, or to apply for major changes.
- Setting and monitoring institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes to improve performance and evaluating their effectiveness.
- Developing, monitoring and review of academic policies and their effectiveness.
- Monitoring and reporting on the quality of learning, teaching and scholarship via regular reports (comprising the detailed minutes of each meeting) to the Governance Board after each Academic Board meeting, and oversight of learning and teaching plans.
- Monitoring and encouraging the current nascent research programs especially in the remote engineering and online lab areas.
- Critically evaluating the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations.
- Promoting, supporting and monitoring the development of online, on-campus and blended delivery methods (especially remote and virtual labs) to provide access and equivalence of learning to all students regardless of their location.
- Monitoring student grades and moderation of assessment for all higher education courses as per recommendations from the Board of Studies and before final release to students.
- Monitoring of pedagogical models with regard to student attrition, progress and completion rates, admission criteria, student and staff survey data, including external benchmarking.
- Reviewing reports and recommendations from the Dean, Deputy Dean and academic sub-committees.
- Acting as the final appeal body on all academic grievances.
- Establishing and monitoring academic leadership requirements, academic staff qualifications, appointments and scholarly activities, to ensure they are appropriate for the types and levels of courses offered.
- Promoting and maintaining regular links with relevant professional organisations and industry groups to ensure that EIT's academic courses maintain industry relevance and create work-ready graduates.
- Communicating with the academic community of EIT, the Governance Board, academic sub-committees, and other similar organisational units.
- Responding to any matters referred to it by the Governance Board or any academic committees.
- Recommending conferral of awards to the Governance Board for graduands of higher education courses.
- Monitoring and undertaking reviews of the Academic Board's effectiveness, including the effectiveness of its standing committees.
- Providing higher education students the opportunity to participate in academic governance.
- Undertaking other functions as delegated by EIT's Governance Board.

Membership

The members of the Academic Board shall be appointed by the Governance Board. The number of members on the Academic Board shall be no more than nine and no less than five. At least two members of the board shall be independent, as per the criteria listed below, including the Chair who will have significant higher education experience, including academic governance. The members are selected for their academic and professional practice experience across both higher education and vocational education, and valuable scholarly contribution in a variety of academic arenas in society.

The membership will consist of:

- An independent Chair (1)
- Independent representative/s who have higher education experience (1-2)
- Engineering industry representatives or representative with extensive professional practice or vocational teaching experience (1-2)
- A representative with online teaching and curriculum design experience (1 desirable but not mandatory)
- Dean of EIT (ex-officio and non-voting) (1)
- Deputy Dean (ex-officio)
- Representative from EIT Executive Management (invited as required, no voting rights)
- Student Representative

Voting members will usually serve terms of three (3) years, and new members may be appointed for one year in the first instance. Members may seek re-appointment at the end of each term, and their expression of interest for further appointment will be considered by the Governance Board, taking into account its succession planning and skills matrix requirements. The term of office for ex-officio members is usually for the duration of the member's employment in the ex-officio position listed. Members are also expected to attend more than 50% of meetings scheduled to maintain attendance requirements.

Casual vacancies may be filled by nominations from the Academic Board membership or Governance Board, ensuring that the expertise from the outgoing member is filled, and final approval sought from the Governance Board. Persons appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office from the time that person is appointed until the expiry of the term of that person's predecessor, and are eligible for re-election.

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

Criteria for being considered independent:

Members are no longer considered independent if:

- their tenure is ten years or more
- they have been employed at EIT within the last three years, including sessional teaching roles
- they are a shareholder of EIT

Meetings

The Academic Board will normally meet every quarter, according to a pre-determined schedule for the year. Meetings may be conducted face-to-face, by telephone, by videoconferencing or teleconferencing technologies including online via web conferencing or similar technology.

The Secretariat for the Academic Board will be responsible for the provision of executive and organisational support for the work of the Academic Board. This position will be filled by the Accreditation & Compliance Manager (or a suitable delegate as approved by the Dean).

Reporting

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

Standing Committees

The Academic Board can form Standing Committees and Working Parties as required to service key areas within its remit, with approval from the Governance Board.

Standing Orders

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

Appendix 1: Standing Orders

Convening of meetings

1. The Academic Board shall meet:

- Every quarter according to a pre-determined schedule.
- 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, an agenda, 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 Academic Board may act on behalf of the Academic Board, but will report all such actions to the next scheduled meeting of the Academic 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 Academic Board (or a majority where all members aren't available).

Meeting Conduct

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

- The Chair shall conduct the meeting according to the standing orders; ensure order is maintained; and give members an opportunity to speak and vote on matters tabled at the meeting.
- The order of business shall follow the agenda unless agreed otherwise.
- Matters for debate, or to move a motion, must be on the agenda and seconded, unless otherwise approved.
- Voting shall be by show of hands unless a secret ballot is requested.
- Members may vote by proxy if they are unable to attend. Notice of proxy may be submitted at any time prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- Matters will be passed by a majority of members.
- The Chair shall have the deciding vote if there is a tie.

- Members may speak more than once at the discretion of the Chair.
- A motion may be amended or withdrawn with the consent of the members.
- When an amendment is before the Chair, discussion shall be confined to that amendment.
- No further amendments can be made if they are substantially the same, or if the amendment is a direct negative.

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 voting members plus one. 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.

Circulating resolution

A resolution in writing signed by all the members of a Board, in either case being at least a quorum, is as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the members duly called and constituted at the time the resolution was last signed and may consist of several documents in like form each signed by one or more of the members.

The Minutes

The Minutes of all meetings will be recorded accurately and confirmed at the next 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 resolutions and actions
- 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:

- Keep their comments to matters before the Board
- Attend meetings and be punctual (attendance required is at least 50% of scheduled meetings without authorised absence for extenuating circumstances)
- Undertake review of documents prior to meetings, within timeframes requested
- Act in the best interests of the Institute and not bring the Institute into disrepute
- Exercise appropriate care and diligence
- Not make false statements or falsify records
- Act appropriately to not gain advantage for themselves or others
- Not make offensive statements or comments or behave improperly
- Shall cease speaking when called to order by the Chair
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest and stand aside from discussions and voting on such matters deemed to be a conflict of interest
- Keep all matters in confidence and not disclose any matters of business to the general public, members of staff or other associates of EIT

Dismissal of Members

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, lack of attendance at meetings and overall unreliability
- Publicly bringing the name of the EIT into disrepute
- Falsifications of any of the EIT's records for personal gain

- Having a criminal record
- Commercial misrepresentation of the 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.