

ACADEMIC BOARD - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

Academic Board is responsible for determining the University's approach to, and assuring the quality of, learning, teaching, research knowledge exchange, and scholarship so that it aligns with, and supports:

- (1) The educational character, mission, vision, values and strategy of the University as defined by the Board of Governors.
- (2) The best possible experience and outcomes for our students.
- (3) Compliance with relevant Conditions of Registration and other relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

This includes strategic oversight and development of the academic regulations, policies and standards set and applied by the University; the quality and continuous improvement of the student academic experience; the strategic oversight of academic matters relating to research and knowledge exchange, including postgraduate research provision, research integrity, and the development of a supportive research environment; the management of academic risks, and the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's academic governance.

Academic Board is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive and its membership encompasses senior academic staff, elected student representatives, elected academic, technical and professional services staff members, senior representation from FX Plus' student and academic support service and relevant co-opted members.

Academic Board is accountable to the Board of Governors for the effective delivery of its responsibilities as defined in this Terms of Reference and provides assurance to the Board of Governors in this regard.

Reports to

Board of Governors

Sub-committees

Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee

Research Integrity & Ethics Committee

Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee

Occurrence

Four times a year¹

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1 To develop, monitor and review academic regulations, policies and procedures that effectively enable the University's mission, vision, values and strategy as approved by the Board of Governors, and in alignment with legislative and regulatory requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1.1 approaches to learning, teaching, research, innovation, knowledge exchange and scholarship;
 - 1.2 the design, approval, monitoring, review and enhancement of the curriculum;
 - 1.3 the academic oversight and management of collaborative provision;
 - 1.4 the assessment and examination of the academic performance of students, ensuring the maintenance of academic standards;

¹ In close alignment with the Board of Governors cycle of business.

- 1.5 the award of qualifications, honorary academic titles, and honorary research fellowships;
- 1.6 the admission, suspension and expulsion of students, and student complaints, appeals and student conduct; and
- 1.7 the appointment of external examiners.

2 To consider the development of the academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them and for advising the Vice-Chancellor & Chief



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Head of Online & Digital Learning

Senior Head of the Academy for Continuing Education

Terms of office for Elected and Student Members:

Elected (staff) Members: two years, renewable to a maximum of two terms or four years.

Student members: one year, renewable to a maximum of two terms or two years.

SERVICING OFFICERS

Secretary Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement

Clerk Governance & Executive Support Officer

IN ATTENDANCE

Up to one Independent Member of the Board of Governors, invited by the Chair of the Board of Governors

Staff as necessary to conduct the business of the Board

ACADEMIC BOARD PROCEDURES

For procedures relating to meeting dates, circulation of meeting papers, quorum, decisions, and record keeping refer to the [Falmouth University Standard Meeting Procedures](#).

Further to the standard meeting procedures:

Decision-making

- (1) Every decision is determined by a majority of members present, which may require voting on the question. In the case of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote.

Sub-committees

- (1) Academic Board may create, and delegate authority to, sub-committees to make decisions and recommendations on its behalf, and to require reports and data from those sub-committees to establish that they are discharging their responsibilities.
- (2) All sub-committees that report to it must have an appropriate Terms of Reference that Academic Board has approved.
- (3) When Academic Board delegates authority to act on its behalf to a sub-committee it remains accountable to the Board of Governors for how the authority that has been delegated is used. Sub-committees must submit a report at least annually, detailing how the committee has discharged its responsibilities within the reporting period. Sub-committees of Academic Board may only create additional sub-committees with the permission of Academic Board. In such cases each body in the chain of delegation is accountable to the body that created it.

Communication

- (4) Agendas, minutes and papers considered at Academic Board will be made available to all staff in the Academic Board SharePoint Site.
- (5) Minutes of Academic Board meetings will be published on the University's [academic governance website](#).

(6) Outcomes of decisions of Academic Board are communicated via the University's available internal and external communications channels. Academic Board maintains a communications plan to support effective communications.

Membership and induction

(7) Academic Board ensures that its members are eligible to serve on the Board and have the relevant expertise and training to fulfil their duties.

(8) Academic Board ensures that all new members receive an induction.

Conflicts of interest

(9) Members are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest linked to their role on the Board or a specific agenda item.

(10) A register of interests of members of Academic Board will be maintained and regularly reported to Academic Board.

(11) At the start of each meeting members will be invited to declare any conflicts of interest relevant to the agenda. Potential conflicts should be notified to the Chair or Secretary in advance of the meeting.

Approved by

Academic Board on 22 October 2025

Board of Governors on 21 November 2025

The Terms of Reference for Academic Board are derived from the [Falmouth University Articles of Government](#) (Version July 2018). Changes to the Articles of Government require approval by the Board of Governors, Privy Council and Office for Students.

Annex: Guiding principles and behaviours for Academic Board and its sub-committees (attached)

ANNEX

Guiding principles and behaviours for Academic Board and its sub-committees

We are united by our commitment to the [Mission, Vision and Values](#) and long-term success and academic reputation of Falmouth University. We model a balanced culture of cohesion and challenge in our meetings, and foster a vibrant, respectful environment that nurtures academic excellence, creativity, innovation and progress, and values every perspective. This is characterised by the following guiding principles and behaviours which are underpinned by our values (**Creative, Achieve, Respectful, Sharing**).

PRINCIPLES

- **Academic standards** – upholding and advancing the quality of teaching, research, knowledge exchange and scholarship is central to our work. We listen to our community and our industry stakeholders, and we critically reflect and utilise data-driven insights to proactively address challenges and recognise successes. We role model and promote a culture of continuous improvement and enhancement.
- **People-centric** – we care about the experience, wellbeing and outcomes of our diverse students and staff. We are a close-knit community and are conscious of the impact our decisions and actions may have across different groups and teams, inside and outside of the University. We ensure there are opportunities for students and staff to engage with academic governance and for their perspectives to have influence.
- **Future-focussed** – change is constant. We are always on the lookout for opportunities and remain vigilant of threats as we navigate a fast-changing and complex external environment. We ensure that decisions align with the Mission, Vision and Values, and our [Learning & Teaching Philosophy](#) and [Research & Knowledge Exchange Philosophy](#) guide our thinking and the development of the academic activities of the University.
- **Responsible** – we understand and take seriously our responsibilities, including our regulatory, legal, and other formal obligations. We ensure our ways of working are legal, ethical, fair and compliant, and seek and test assurance with regard to University compliance. We role model Values-aligned behaviours, both in meetings and throughout broader University activities.
- **Transparent** – we are open, clear and transparent in our communications, fostering trust, cooperation and collaboration. We ensure that decisions are appropriately communicated to those impacted.

BEHAVIOURS

- **Engaged** – we prepare thoroughly for each meeting, listen actively, and contribute meaningfully. We actively respond to actions assigned to us in meetings, embrace opportunities to participate in projects beyond meetings, and actively develop our understanding of the breadth of the University's academic activities and the context we operate within.
- **Curious** – we speak out if we have questions or concerns. By seeking further insight, we broaden perspectives, gain a deeper grasp of the issues before us, and enhance the quality of decisions and outcomes.
- **Constructive** – we share our individual perspectives, insights and experiences in a thoughtful and pragmatic manner. We navigate complex issues with empathy and understanding, and ensure our contributions are solutions focused.
- **Open-minded** – we value different perspectives, and welcome constructive feedback and challenge. By remaining receptive to alternative approaches and ideas, we create an environment where everyone feels safe to engage in meaningful, respectful discussion and debate, supporting an inclusive and collaborative culture.
- **Cohesive** – debate is healthy. In situations where there are opposing views in meetings, we remain mindful of the wider context and understand the importance of achieving consensus and presenting a unified stance after decisions have been taken, as well as maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive discussions.