

## Academic Governance and Management Policy

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## Introduction

This policy sets out the International College of Contemporary Sciences (ICCS) approach to academic governance and to the stewardship of academic standards. It explains how the College assures and enhances the quality of learning teaching and assessment so that students realise the intended learning outcomes of their programme and progress to successful employment or further study. Systematic monitoring through observation of learning and teaching moderation of assessment and regular review of provision makes a direct contribution to student success and institutional effectiveness.

## Definitions:

Academic regulations are the arrangements that regulate academic conduct and address any departure from the expected standards of conduct. They also include the measures that safeguard academic standards.

Academic standards are the levels of achievement that students must demonstrate to obtain an award. They are set with reference to nationally agreed points including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements and for Entry to Level Three the Regulated Qualifications Framework and its level descriptors. Standards concern the appropriateness of learning outcomes and curriculum and the effectiveness of assessment in testing achievement.

Quality of the learning experience refers to the ways in which the College provides students with the best possible opportunity to achieve the stated outcomes of their programme and the standards of the intended award. It encompasses learning teaching assessment and academic guidance the deployment of learning resources recruitment and admission careers advice and guidance pastoral support information for students and processes for academic appeals and complaints.

Programme approval means the process through which new programmes are scrutinised and authorised for delivery.

Programme review means a regular evidence informed evaluation of a programme to confirm standards quality and continuing relevance.

Annual monitoring is a reflective cross institutional process that considers previous and current evidence and identifies priorities for the forthcoming year.

## Scope:

This policy applies to all provision that leads to an award delivered or supported by ICCS including provision that is taught with or on behalf of awarding bodies. It covers the rules and regulations for normal academic conduct arrangements for appeals and complaints and expectations for programme approval monitoring and review.

## Governance Structure and Responsibilities:

- Governing Body provides strategic oversight and receives assurance on academic standards and student outcomes through regular reporting and annual accountability statements
- Academic Board is the senior academic authority that safeguards academic standards approves regulations and policies and oversees quality assurance and enhancement
- Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee advises Academic Board on the operation of quality assurance and enhancement including annual monitoring programme approval external examining and action planning
- Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee oversees pedagogic development inclusive practice digital learning approaches assessment design and moderation
- Programme Committees consider programme level quality and standards including student feedback external examiner comments assessment outcomes and enhancement actions
- Assessment Boards confirm module marks and awards ensure consistency and fairness and consider recommendations from external examiners in line with awarding body regulations
- Ethics Committee provides oversight for ethical approval of research and scholarly activity involving human participants data or other sensitive materials
- Senior Leadership Team provides executive leadership ensures resources and approves operational implementation plans arising from academic governance decisions
- Course Managers lead programme delivery ensure compliance with regulations oversee assessment and feedback and maintain programme action plans
- External Examiners provide independent externality on standards assessment and comparability and report annually to inform enhancement
- Student Representatives contribute to programme and institutional committees reflect the student voice and support co creation of enhancement actions



## Decision Making and Delegation:

The Academic Board is responsible for academic policy and standards and may delegate operational matters to its standing committees with clear terms of reference membership quorum decision making protocols and reporting routes. All decisions taken under delegation are reported to Academic Board for ratification or noting as appropriate.

## Programme Approval & Review Lifecycle:

The programme lifecycle is managed to secure standards quality and relevance to future progression and employability.

- Approval new programmes are scrutinised for academic coherence market demand resource viability learning outcomes assessment strategy externality and alignment with reference points
- Modification material changes to aims outcomes or assessment strategy follow an approval route that is proportionate to the significance of the change and ensures continued alignment with reference points and awarding body requirements
- Withdrawal proposals include a detailed teach out plan that protects the interests of current students and applicants
- Collaborative provision including delivery with partners is subject to due diligence approval and ongoing oversight proportionate to the level of risk

## Assessment and Awards:

Assessment is designed to be valid reliable fair inclusive and authentic and to promote learning.

- Assessment strategies map to programme aims and learning outcomes and are communicated clearly in definitive documentation and course handbooks
- Assessment design promotes academic integrity and mitigates opportunities for misconduct including through varied authentic tasks and proportionate use of similarity checking tools
- Reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice are provided in line with the Equality Act and institutional policy so that students are assessed fairly
- Internal verification standardisation and moderation processes check that assessment is conducted consistently and that feedback is developmental and timely
- External examiners provide independent assurance on standards and assessment processes and their recommendations inform improvement
- Assessment Boards operate in accordance with approved regulations and awarding body requirements and confirm module results and awards

- Academic misconduct allegations are considered under the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Procedure and students have access to advice and support.

## Monitoring Review and Enhancement:

ICCS operates a layered approach to quality assurance and enhancement that is evidence informed and student centred.

- Module evaluation and student feedback inform immediate improvements and are considered by Programme Committees with actions communicated to students
- Annual monitoring brings together quantitative and qualitative evidence including continuation completion and attainment data student voice external examiner reports and outcomes of observation of learning and teaching
- Periodic programme review evaluates standards quality and continuing relevance with externality and student participation and results in an enhancement focused action plan
- External examiner reports are reviewed by Programme Committees and by the Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee with institutional themes reported to Academic Board
- Enhancement planning sets time bound actions responsibilities and measures of success and progress is tracked through the committee structure.

## Student Engagement and Academic Voice:

Students are partners in quality assurance and enhancement and are engaged through the following mechanisms.

- Student representation at programme committee academic board and working groups with appropriate training and support
- Module and programme surveys focus groups and student staff forums with feedback and you said we did reporting
- Involvement in periodic review and approval events as panel members or contributors
- Opportunities to contribute to curriculum design digital learning resources and peer support initiatives

## Data and Information for Quality and Standards:

Reliable data and analysis support effective academic governance.

- Use of timely data on recruitment continuation progression completion attainment and graduate outcomes to inform decision making
- Monitoring of differential outcomes to identify and address any gaps in student success and experience
- Transparent publication of definitive programme information assessment regulations and rules of award
- Secure handling of student information in line with data protection legislation and institutional policy

## Digital Learning and Academic Resources:

The College supports high quality digital learning in line with sector guidance.

- Use of a virtual learning environment to provide structured learning activities assessment information feedback and resources
- Accessibility of digital content and learning resources is reviewed in line with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations and Jisc guidance
- Provision of academic skills and digital capabilities support through workshops guidance and one to one support.

## Academic Staff Development:

High quality learning and assessment depend upon suitably qualified staff and a culture of continuous professional development.

- Recruitment ensures that staff hold appropriate academic or professional qualifications and current industry experience where relevant
- New staff complete induction with emphasis on assessment standards inclusive practice and student support
- Peer observation of learning and teaching informs individual and collective enhancement and identifies effective practice
- Staff engage in professional development scholarly activity and awarding body training and share effective practice through College forums

## Academic Regulations & Procedures:

The following procedures operate under this policy. Detailed guidance is published in the Quality Assurance Handbook and on the College website.

- Academic appeals
- Student complaints
- Academic integrity and misconduct
- Registration recognition of prior learning interruption and withdrawal
- Assessment boards and award conferment
- Programme approval modification review and withdrawal

## Risk Management:

Academic governance incorporates proactive risk management to protect academic standards and the student interest.

- Risk registers identify academic quality and standards risks with owners mitigations and review points
- Triggers include material changes in outcomes patterns in student feedback or external examiner concerns and these prompt targeted action and reporting
- Where risk indicates potential breach of regulatory conditions escalation routes to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body are followed

## Roles and Responsibilities Matrix:

Role	Key responsibilities for quality and standards
Governing Body	Receives assurance on standards and outcomes approves strategy oversees risk receives annual academic report
Academic Board	Approves academic policy and regulations safeguards standards oversees quality assurance and enhancement
Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee	Monitors annual monitoring external examiner themes programme approval and review tracks enhancement plans
Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee	Oversees pedagogy inclusive practice assessment design and moderation supports staff development
Assessment Boards	Confirm module results and awards ensure fairness and consistency consider external examiner advice
Senior Leadership Team	Allocates resources approves implementation plans monitors risk and compliance
Course Managers	Lead programme delivery ensure assessment quality maintain programme action plans engage students
External Examiners	Provide independent externality on standards and assessment submit annual reports
Student Representatives	Present student voice contribute to committees and reviews support enhancement actions

## Monitoring and Review of this Policy:

Academic Board monitors implementation of this policy. The policy is reviewed annually or earlier if regulatory or awarding body requirements change.

## References:

- Office for Students provider conditions and guidance
- Department for Education guidance for higher education providers
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements
- Regulated Qualifications Framework and Ofqual conditions and handbook
- Awarding body regulations for example Pearson, City and Guilds, NCFE Gatehouse Awards and NOCN
- Jisc guidance on digital learning accessibility and academic integrity
- Office of the Independent Adjudicator good practice framework

