

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Terms of reference 2024/25

Academic Council is a sub-committee of the Court of Governors and - [subject to the provisions in paragraph 24 of the Articles of Association](#) - the University's most senior committee in relation to academic matters.

The purpose of Academic Council is to oversee academic strategies, policy, and regulatory matters, and to provide assurance to the Court of Governors that academic governance is robust and effective.

Specifically, Academic Council will:

- 1) Deliberate and decide on general issues relating to the research, scholarship, teaching and courses at the University, ensuring alignment of decisions with the University Strategy: Being Westminster 2022-29.
- 2) Consider and provide advice to the Vice-Chancellor and the Court on:
 - a. development of the academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them¹;
 - b. matters concerning the educational character and mission of the University; and
 - c. matters concerning equality, diversity and inclusion in our educational endeavours.
- 3) Provide assurance to the Court on academic standards and the integrity of academic qualifications – including programmes delivered through academic collaborations and partnerships - and confirm that key academic risks are being effectively managed.
- 4) Provide assurance to the Court that academic governance is robust and effective and complies with the Higher Education Code of Governance².
- 5) Approve University-level academic strategies and policies as designated in the University's strategy and policy matrix. Where appropriate, Academic Council will consider and recommend approval of certain University-level strategies and policies to the Court.
- 6) Monitor the effectiveness of academic strategies and policies and the progress and achievement of agreed academic strategic performance indicators and targets.
- 7) Oversee the University's academic portfolio and, within the scope of the educational character and mission of the University determined by the Court, determine the content of that portfolio.
- 8) Approve the University's academic and student regulations and the awards which the University may validate and confer.
- 9) Validate the University's programmes of study³.
- 10) Award students academic credit and confer upon students academic awards of the University³.

¹ Academic Council does not have powers over financial expenditure or other allocation of resources, this authority rests with the University Executive Board

² Or provide a justification where a choice is made not to apply the Code

³ Delegated in full to a sub-committee of Academic Council

11) Approve the appointment and removal of External Examiners³.

Membership

Ex-officio (11)

Vice-Chancellor (Chair) (1)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (3)⁴
Head, Graduate School (1)
Director, Student and Academic Services (1)
Head of the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation (1)
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head of College (3)
President of the University Students' Union (1)
University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (1)

Elected/Nominated (11)

Two members of academic staff from each College elected by the academic staff of that College (6)
One Head of School elected by the Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School (1)
Two currently registered students⁵ nominated by the Students' Union (2)
One Associate Head of College or Head of School nominated by the Chair (1)
One member of academic staff nominated by the Chair (1)

Co-opted (2)

Academic Registrar
Deputy Registrar Quality and Standards

Secretariat

Academic Registrar⁶ (Clerk)
Clerk to the Court of Governors or nominee (Secretary)

Quorum

A quorum of the Academic Council shall comprise a minimum of 40% of the ex-officio, elected and nominated members, including the Chair or a Deputy Chair.

Terms of office

Elected/nominated members shall serve a term of office not exceeding three years commencing 1 August in the year of appointment. Members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of office.

Former elected/nominated members cannot rejoin Academic Council as an elected or nominated member until after a period of absence of no less than one year.

Meetings

Academic Council shall meet at least four times a year. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair as deemed necessary to execute the business of the committee.

⁴ The Chair will appoint one of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors as the Deputy Chair of Academic Council.

⁵ Student membership normally should include one undergraduate student and one postgraduate student (PGT or PGR).

⁶ Also a co-opted member