



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

April 2007

STANDING ORDERS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

1. Chairperson, Secretariat

- 1.1. As provided for in the Universities Act, 1997 the President shall be Chairperson, and shall preside at all meetings of the Academic Council. If the President at any time chooses not to so preside, the President shall nominate a person to preside in his/her place.
- 1.2. The Associate Vice President Academic shall be Secretary to the Academic Council. He/she shall be assisted in carrying out his/her duties by a Recording Secretary, who shall not be a member of the Council. In the absence of the Associate Vice President Academic, the functions of Secretary shall be assumed by the Assistant Registrar.

2. Meetings

- 2.1. A schedule of meetings for each Academic Year shall be adopted by the Council in advance of that year. For the purpose of these orders, an Academic Year shall run from 1 September to 31 August of the following year. The dates of meetings, once adopted, can be postponed or brought forward only by the Chairperson, should the need arise.
- 2.2. Academic Council Grading meetings shall be convened, and shall be included in the schedule of meetings for each Academic Year. These meetings of Council shall have the specific function of approving all grades, and recommendations for awards of the University to be made to students, in accordance with the academic regulations of the University.
- 2.3. Academic Council Grading meetings shall be subject to the provision of these standing orders, except where specific provisions are detailed hereunder for such meetings.
- 2.4. Additional meetings may be convened either
 - i) by the Council at one of its scheduled meetings,
 - ii) by the Chairperson, or
 - iii) by a request to the Chairperson signed by at least *one third* of the Members of the Council,

in all cases giving at least *fifteen* working days notice in advance of the date of the meeting. Notice shall immediately be circulated to all members of Council in sufficient time to allow for placing of additional agenda items in accordance with Section 3.1 (below).

- 2.5. **In exceptional cases, an emergency meeting of Council may be called by the Chairperson. The first item on the Agenda of such meeting shall be the suspension of certain provisions of Standing Orders (namely the specific paragraphs listed herewith), such that the meeting so called can proceed, without the necessity of observing the *fifteen* working days' notice requirement. The specific provisions of these Standing Orders which shall be waived by Council at such emergency meeting are: paragraph 2.4; paragraph 3.1; paragraph 5.1; paragraph 8.5.**

- 2.6. The normal duration of meetings shall be not more than *three* hours. A motion to extend a meeting beyond this duration must be agreed by at least two thirds of the members present and voting.

3. Agenda

- 3.1. Any member may place an item on the Agenda for a meeting of the Council provided the item is conveyed in writing to the Recording Secretary at least *seven* working days in advance of the meeting to which it refers. The Secretary shall cause the Agenda to be circulated at least *five* working days in advance of each meeting.

- 3.2. Notification of Agenda items, and circulation of the Agenda may be executed by electronic means.

4. Minutes

- 4.1. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, minutes of all meetings of the Council, and shall circulate to all members the draft minutes of each meeting within *three* weeks of the meeting's taking place.

- 4.2. Provision will be made for electronic circulation of the minutes.

- 4.3. Procedure for amendments to draft minutes:

- (i) After each meeting draft minutes, once approved by the Chair, are circulated to all Academic Council members.
- (ii) Members can submit proposed amendments to these draft minutes up to 48 hours before the next scheduled meeting.
- (iii) At the next meeting a list of proposed amendments for approval by Council shall be tabled. These amendments will be considered in the first instance under the agenda item MINUTES. Other proposed amendments may also come from the floor at this time.
- (iv) When all amendments have been considered and either rejected or approved, the Chair will sign the minutes, subject to the approved amendments' being duly inscribed in the minutes.

5. Documents

- 5.1. All documents for circulation to members of the Council shall be lodged with the Recording Secretary at least *seven* working days in advance of the meeting to which they refer. Documents (or draft Agenda items or questions) given to the Chairperson or the Secretary shall be passed on for processing to the Recording Secretary. The Secretary shall cause documents for a meeting to be circulated at least *five* working days in advance of the meeting.

- 5.2. A document may be tabled at a meeting provided it relates to one of the Agenda items for the meeting and provided two thirds of the members present agree to its being tabled. This facility shall be used only under exceptional circumstances and those circumstances shall be clearly explained in writing on any such documentation thus tabled.

6. Quorum and Attendance

- 6.1. A meeting shall not commence until at least *one third* of the members of Council are present. If a quorum is not forthcoming within *ten* minutes of the duly notified commencement time of the meeting, the Chairperson shall adjourn that meeting, and set an alternative date for the meeting.
- 6.2. The requirement of a quorum shall be waived in respect of Academic Council Ratification meetings, i.e. meetings with the only agenda item being ratification of awards. Such meetings are scheduled to take place twice a year.
- 6.3. The Chairperson may by resolution invite a non-member to be in attendance at a meeting or meetings of Council, either for all or part of such meetings.
- 6.4. In the case of Academic Council Grading meetings, it shall be normal custom and practice to have present the Student Academic Administration Officer, or a person duly authorised to deputise for the Student Academic Administration Officer.
- 6.5. To avoid any conflict of interest issues, it shall be normal custom and practice to request the student representatives on Council to absent themselves from Academic Council Grading meetings, or from that part of regular Academic Council meetings where grading constitutes an Agenda item.
- 6.6. In the event that a matter is on the Agenda for consideration by Council, which could potentially constitute a conflict of interest issue for any individual member of Council, that member shall be obliged to inform the Chairperson of the potential for a conflict of interest, and in such circumstances the Chairperson may request that the said member withdraw from the meeting, while the agenda item in question is being considered by Council.

7. Mode of Address

- 7.1. Speakers shall always address the Chair. While a member is speaking other members shall remain silent.

8. Motions

- 8.1. A motion is a proposal which is put forward. A resolution is the acceptance of a motion by a meeting.
- 8.2. For a motion to be put to a meeting it requires a proposer and a seconder. A motion from the Chair does not require a seconder.
- 8.3. For an amendment to a motion to be put to the meeting, it requires a proposer and a seconder. An amendment shall be put to a vote before the original motion.
- 8.4. If an amendment is not carried the Chairperson shall put the motion in its original form to a vote. If an amendment is carried the Chairperson shall put the amended motion to the meeting. Before either a motion or an amendment is put to a vote, the

Secretary shall read out the text of each such motion or amendment, upon which the vote is to be taken.

- 8.5 A substantive motion relating to University policy must be lodged with the Recording Secretary at least *ten* working days before the meeting so that it can be circulated to the members in advance. Such a motion may not be amended at the meeting.

9. Voting

- 9.1. Voting shall normally be by show of hands. The results of voting shall be counted and recorded by the Secretary.
- 9.2. It is open to any member of Council to propose a motion requesting a secret ballot, and if this motion is seconded, it can be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of 8 above.
- 9.3. The number of votes for and against a motion and the number of abstentions shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 9.4. If the number of votes for and against a proposal are equal the Chairperson has an additional casting vote as Chairperson.
- 9.5. At a meeting of Council, a majority shall constitute a majority of those members present and voting.

10. Points of Order, and Closure

- 10.1. A member may, at any time and without notice, interrupt debate by raising a "point of order". The Chairperson shall decide whether the point of order is admissible, and the Chairperson's ruling shall be final.
- 10.2. A motion for closure, if seconded in the usual way, must be put to the vote at once, without being discussed.

11. Time Limits

- 11.1 A maximum time of 30 minutes shall be allocated to any single agenda item, except for Special Meetings, which are convened to discuss a single item or topic.
- 11.2 If a conclusion is not reached in 30 minutes and the item requires further discussion, it shall be deferred to the next meeting of Council, or should Council so resolve, a special meeting may be convened to consider the agenda item in question.
- 11.3 Notwithstanding the provisions in 11.1 and 11.2 above, Council may vote in due manner at the commencement of a regularly convened meeting of Council, to set aside the 30 minutes time limit, for any specified agenda item, for that meeting.

12. Emergency Items

- 12.1. Any member may seek to add an item to the Agenda as an Emergency Item. An Emergency Item can only be one in relation to a matter which could not have been foreseen *ten* working days in advance of the meeting and which must be resolved before the next scheduled meeting of Council. A vote shall be held on every proposal

for an Emergency item to be inscribed, and for it to be inscribed it must receive the assenting votes of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting. Members may vote only for or against the inscription of an Emergency Item: members abstaining shall not be considered, for the purposes of the Vote, to be "present and voting".

13. Other Business

- 13.1. The rubric "Other Business" on each Agenda shall be used only
- i) to inform the meeting of Agenda items which are proposed for the following meeting or
 - ii) to convey briefly other items of information of a factual nature.

14. Interpretation and Review

- 14.1. Where a dispute arises as to the interpretation of these Standing Orders, the Chairperson shall rule on the matter. The Chairperson's ruling shall stand unless it is formally challenged and the challenge is seconded. In such an eventuality, the Chairperson and the challenger (and they alone) shall briefly address the meeting on the issue and a vote of all the members shall then be taken. The result of this vote shall be binding.
- 14.2 As and when Council shall deem it necessary, these Standing Orders may be re-examined and revised.