

ACADEMIC BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Authority

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HQC) is a standing committee of the Academies Australasia Polytechnic (AAPoly) Academic Board (AB) was established by resolution at the meeting of the AB on 27 October 2017.

2. Definitions and abbreviations

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| <i>AAPoly</i> | <i>Academies Australasia Polytechnic</i> |
| <i>AB</i> | <i>Academic Board</i> |
| <i>ASQA</i> | <i>Australian Standards and Quality Authority</i> |
| <i>BOD</i> | <i>Board of Directors</i> |
| <i>HCC</i> | <i>Higher Education Courses Committee (standing committee of AB)</i> |
| <i>HE</i> | <i>Higher Education</i> |
| <i>HESF</i> | <i>Higher Education Standards Framework</i> |
| <i>HQC</i> | <i>Higher Education Quality Committee (standing committee of AB)</i> |
| <i>Pathways</i> | <i>the transition and opportunity to progress from VET to HE</i> |
| <i>TEQSA</i> | <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority</i> |
| <i>VET</i> | <i>Vocational Education and Training</i> |
| <i>External member</i> | <i>a person not currently employed by AAPoly</i> |
| <i>Standing Committee</i> | <i>a permanent organisational group established by the AB</i> |
| <i>Working Group</i> | <i>a temporary organisational group established by the AB</i> |

3. Purpose of the Higher Education Quality Committee

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HQC) of AAPoly has delegated responsibility to:

- ensure that the delivery of Higher education (HE) programs aligns with AAPoly's quality assurance principles, relevant policies and the expectations of the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF);
- ensure teaching practitioners, scholarly activities and learning experiences are consistently high quality and provide an optimum higher education teaching and learning environment; and
- ensure the AB is informed regularly of emerging academic risks and of intervention outcomes.

For more detail on delegations see Section 8 of this Terms of Reference and Appendix A of the AAPoly Academic Governance Framework.

4. Activities of the Higher Education Quality Committee

The HQC will carry out its responsibilities to the HE endeavours of AAPoly through activities such as, but not limited to:

- developing a Teaching and Learning Plan for submission to the AB for consideration;
- developing a Benchmarking Plan for submission to the AB for consideration;
- developing an Academic Scholarship Plan for submission to the AB for consideration;
- developing an Academic Professional Development Plan for submission to the AB for consideration;
- developing an Academic Quality Assurance Plan for submission to the AB for consideration;
- monitoring the implementation of all academic governance plans approved by the AB;
- liaising with the HCC and VQC to ensure thorough oversight of efficiency, effectiveness and compliance of all developments and reviews;
- developing, monitoring and reviewing policy and procedures relevant to HE teaching, learning, quality processes, professional development, staff recruitment, students, and academic risk management and making recommendations to the AB for consideration;
- overseeing the collection of data relevant to monitoring the quality of HE teaching and learning at AAPoly;
- ensuring HE teaching and learning data is regularly analysed and academic risks, including academic misconduct are reported to the AB; and
- maintaining a record of all activities and initiatives in an auditable archive that facilitates continuous improvement of processes.

The HQC is also expected to contribute to period reviews of courses and regulatory submissions as well as advice on all course matters to the AB and Board of Directors (BOD) when requested.

5. Reporting, subcommittees, relationships and student involvement

The HQC reports on its activities to the AB.

The HQC Chair will determine the reports the HQC requires and this will be reflected in the HQC minutes and agenda.

The HQC Chair may create subcommittees, working groups and teams and make use of individual portfolio holders at AAPoly to discharge its responsibilities.

Subcommittees, working groups, teams of individual portfolio holders tasked to assist the HQC require Terms of Reference to guide their activities. A template for TORs is found at Appendix G of the AAPoly Academic Governance Framework.

The HQC may also co-opt persons with relevant expertise whose input will assist the HQC in its work.

The HQC works closely with the operational staff and Academic Dean of AAPoly to ensure all its activities are adequately resourced to enable it to fulfil its duties and obligations as a significant part of the AAPoly academic governance system.

The HQC will provide the opportunity for student involvement in academic governance through a position on the committee as well as ensuring that where possible all subcommittees, working groups and teams include formal student input.

6. Membership, appointment and terms

6.1 Membership

The size and composition of the HQC is intended to facilitate effective discharge of its responsibilities and obligations to good academic governance at AAPoly. The HQC membership is described in the following points.

- The HQC will normally have at least eight (8) members comprised as follows:
 - At least two persons, external to AAPoly
 - Academic Dean (ex officio)
 - Benchmarking Portfolio Holder (ex officio)
 - Academic Quality Assurance Portfolio Holder (ex officio)
 - Teaching & Learning Portfolio Holder (ex officio)
 - Student Services delegate (ex officio)
 - Student nominee
- The AB will appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the AB from the membership. The Chair should normally be an external member.
- All members of the HQC are voting members.
- The HQC will also invite the convenors of any subcommittees, working groups or teams or other portfolio holders that have been tasked with duties to attend HQC meetings to report on progress and inform the HQC on matters arising.
- The HQC will also permit the Chair or Deputy of the AB to attend all meetings of the HQC or any of its subcommittees, working groups or teams if they request it.

6.2 Appointment and terms

External members are appointed and reappointed by the AB. Appointments are normally for a period of two (2) years. Appointees serving effectively are eligible for re-appointment by the BOD for a maximum of five (5) consecutive terms.

The student nominee is appointed by the AB normally for a period of two (2) years, and after effective service, may be reappointed for a further term. Student nominees serving on subcommittees, working groups or teams created by the HQC are appointed by the Chair of the HQC.

The Chair and Deputy Chair are appointed by the AB normally for a period of two (2) years and if serving effectively are eligible for re-appointment by the BOD for a maximum of five (5) consecutive terms.

6.3 When membership ceases

A person ceases to be a member of the HQC if that person at any time during their term of office:

- resigns from the HQC;
- no longer holds the relevant position that entitles the person to be on the HQC;
- in the case of a person occupying a specific role, when the person ceases to occupy that role;
- is absent from three consecutive meetings of the HQC, and has not been given leave by the Chair; or
- the member dies.

6.4 Profile of Higher Education Quality Committee Members

It is a general expectation that all persons, regardless of their position, involved in academic governance do so with independence of thought and with the best outcome for AAPoly in mind and for a proper purpose. Conflicts of interest that may interfere with this capacity are called for at every meeting.

6.4.1 General members

The enabling attributes and skills categories, that all internal and external appointees to and ex officio members, of the HQC collectively bring to deliberations and the exercise of responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- A mix of current specialist, discipline-based knowledge and general academic expertise.
- Substantive familiarity with education, teaching and learning at a senior level.
- Familiarity with the operation, opportunities and risks of the local and global graduate employment market.
- Well established networks in Higher and Vocational Education and relevant employment sectors
- Knowledge and understanding of current and future trends in the Higher and Vocational Education sector.
- Substantive experience with risk management, decision making, governance and compliance at a senior level, preferably Board level.
- Knowledge of employer expectations and the relevant employment market opportunities for AAPoly graduates.
- Professional contact with a relevant network of individuals and organisations.

6.4.2 Chair of the HQC

The Chair of the HQC will normally be a person external to AAPoly, and the following attributes and skills are desirable and should guide the choice of a suitable chairperson:

- Experience in leadership on or chairing of governance boards or committees
- Well-developed communication, analytical and decision-making skills

- An ability to contribute to at least three of the categories of qualities and skills in the list in 6.4.1 above.

6.4.3 Deputy Chair of the HQC

The Deputy Chair of the HQC may be selected from either the internal or external members of the HQC, other than the student member. Ideally, given the demands of the role, the Deputy Chair will have similar attributes to the Chair as detailed in 6.4.2

6.5 Member duties and functions

The roles of all members of the HQC require them to engage in the work of the HQC with a focus on the best academic performance possible for the benefit of students and staff of AAPoly. In carrying out this work the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary of the HQC have particular responsibilities.

6.5.1 The Chair of the HQC:

- chairs all meetings of the HQC;
- Is responsible for managing and supervising the work of the HQC;
- Is responsible for reporting on HQC activities to the AB; and
- Is subject to any delegations of authority given by the AB and the BOD.

6.5.2 The Deputy Chair of the HQC:

- is responsible for carrying out the duties expected of the Chair in the absence of the Chair;
- supports the role of the Chair as delegated by the Chair; and
- Is subject to any delegations of authority given by the AB and the BOD.

6.5.3 A Secretary of the HQC will be appointed by the CEO, and will:

- provide administrative support and resources to the HQC;
- support the role of the Chair and Deputy Chair as delegated by the Chair and Deputy Chair; and
- have specific secretarial functions related to HQC meetings (see Section 7.3 here and Schedule 2 of the AB Charter)

7. Meetings

7.1 Ordinary meetings

Ordinary meetings are those held on a regular basis, usually scheduled in advance on the annual Academic Board Calendar and have a standard agenda which reflects the work program for the HQC for the year. Ordinary meetings normally follow these principles.

1. The HQC will meet at least four (4) times a year.
2. The quorum for meetings of the HQC is 50% of the members (if the full membership is an even number), or the membership divided by 2, and add 1 (if the membership is

an odd number), but it is essential that there is at least one external, and one internal member present.

3. The Chair, or in their absence, the Deputy Chair, or in the case of both these members being unavailable, the Academic Dean will convene all meetings.
4. Dates of the meetings of the HQC will be published (in print and electronically) in the annual Academic Board Calendar which will normally be finalised at the first meeting of the calendar year.
5. Meetings are normally held in person but may be facilitated by communications technology to enable attendance.

7.2 Special meetings

The Chair may at any time convene a special meeting of the HQC. The AAPoly AB or BOD can also request a special meeting which will not normally be refused. A special meeting will also be arranged if a majority of members indicate in writing a request for a special meeting.

7.3 Procedures of meetings

These are general procedural aspects of ordinary meetings of the HQC. For further information about the role of Secretary of the HQC, which are similar to those of the Secretary of the AB, see Schedule 2 of the AB Charter.

1. Notice of meeting will normally be given at least fourteen (14) working days in advance of the meeting specifying the date, time, venue and agenda of the business to be transacted at that meeting.
2. The Chair and the HQC may inform itself in any way it finds effective and efficient for its work, including requesting reports from AAPoly operational individuals, working groups or other teams.
3. The Chair and HQC determine standing items on the HQC agenda.
4. The only routine reports to the HQC are those of HQC subcommittees, working groups or teams, as specified in their terms of reference, while other reports on the HQC agenda are by specific request by the Chair and HQC on matters required by the HQC for its deliberations.
5. Motions require a proposer and seconder unless introduced by the Chair.
6. Decisions will be the outcome of debate and collaborative intent.
7. When a vote is required it will be based on a simple majority.
8. No vote may be taken at a meeting which does not have a quorum.
9. The Chair will have a deliberative and casting vote.
10. Decisions will be formally recorded in the minutes.
11. Any member may request a decision be deferred to allow them to seek more information on the matter being decided.
12. Members may abstain from voting or discussing a decision for reason of conscience or conflict of interest.
13. The HQC Secretary will normally take the minutes of HQC.
14. Minutes of meetings must be kept in a secure and accessible place and will be maintained by the Secretary to the HQC.
15. In appropriate circumstances, the HQC may delegate its powers to the Chair and these decisions will be ratified at the next meeting. This will usually only occur if a decision is urgent and required outside the regular meeting cycle, and convening a

8. Delegations to the Higher Education Quality Committee

The HQC has the delegated responsibility from the AB to:

1. create subcommittees, working groups or teams to carry out its delegated duties;
2. create formal terms of reference for all subcommittees, working groups or teams that are generated by the HQC;
3. liaise with the HCC to contribute to new course proposals and proposed changes to existing courses with regard to quality assurance processes;
4. liaise with the HCC to contribute to documentation for course accreditation and/or re-accreditation;
5. develop, monitor and review academic quality related policies and procedures for relevance, effectiveness and the extent to which they reflect best practice in the sector, and make recommendations to the AB for consideration;
6. develop strategic academic governance and HE quality assurance plans, (such as, but not limited to, the Benchmarking Plan, the Teaching & Learning Plan, the Academic Professional Development Plan, the Academic Scholarship Plan, the Academic Quality Assurance Plan) for submission to the AB for consideration;
7. implement and monitor strategic academic governance and HE quality assurance plans as approved by the AB; and
8. monitor academic risks, including academic misconduct and analyse causes and propose interventions and bring arising academic risk matters to the attention to the AB for consideration and reporting to the BOD.

VERSION CONTROL

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