Academic Council: Membership and Terms of Reference

The Academic Council is, under powers delegated by the Board of Directors, the academic authority of the School.

Composition
There shall be an Academic Council of no more than thirty members. The Council members shall comprise:

Ex Officio Members
Dean (Chair)
Chief Executive of the School
Chief Marketing Officer
Registrar
Admissions Manager
Head of Quality
Head of Academic Services

Appointed Members
Up to 12 module leaders, appointed by the Dean, representing each level of study.

Elected Members
Up to five annually elected student representatives from the registered students of the School, representing each level at undergraduate study (4,5, and 6) and both full-time and part-time study at postgraduate level.

Independent Members
At least one independent member appointed by the Council with substantial experience at an executive level in the provision and management of higher education in the United Kingdom.

One member, appointed by the Council with experience in employability and industry.

Quorum: Half the Council members, at least one of whom must be the Chair, or his/her nominee, and one of whom must be an independent member.

Secretary: A Secretary, appointed by the Chair, will minute the meetings on behalf of the Council but will not take part in the voting of the Council.

Frequency: The Academic Council shall normally meet at least three times in each academic year. This frequency may be increased depending on the workload of the Council.

Chairs: The Chair of the Academic Council shall normally be the Dean. However, in discussions relating to Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, Programme/Module Approval or Re-approval, Programme/Module Withdrawal, and Major Programme/Module Modifications, the Dean shall cede the Chair to the independent member, and also cede his/her voting rights. This is to ensure that the Dean is not "marking his/her own work".

Voting and Recommendations

It is expected that decisions of the Academic Council will be reached by consensus and after due debate, but if a vote is required then decisions shall be made on the basis of a majority of those attending and voting at a

quorate meeting. In the event of an equality of votes being cast, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

As a check to the authority of the Dean, who is normally the Chair of the Academic Council, the Dean shall cede the Chair to an independent member and also cede his/her voting rights in the following discussions:

- Review and approval of Annual Programme Monitoring Reports;
- Review and approval of new programmes or modules;
- Review and approval of withdrawal of programmes or modules;
- Review and approval of major module/programme modifications.

A record of voting shall be minuted.

Where a member has any significant personal interest that might be reasonably deemed to compromise impartiality, conflict with their duty as a Council member, or result in private benefit, they must declare it; in which case the Chair may determine to suspend their voting powers.

Reserved Business

The student representatives on the Academic Council shall not be entitled to receive papers, participate in or be present for discussions relating to the admission or academic assessment and examination of individual students or affecting the appointment, promotion or personal affairs of a member of staff of the School. The Chair of the Council shall decide whether a matter falls within the terms of the above provision. The decision shall be final and neither the Chair of the Academic Council nor Council is bound to give any reason for the decision.
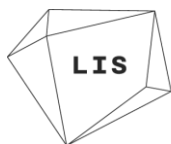
Relationship with the Board of Directors

a) The Board of Directors commits itself to establishing a student-centric institution of recognised academic quality and integrity.

b) The Board of Directors recognises the importance of demonstrating that there are strong grounds for public confidence in the management and operation of the School and the existence of a well-founded, cohesive and self-critical academic community that can demonstrate its commitment to and guardianship of academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

c) To this end the Board of Directors cedes its authority to the Academic Council for those matters relating to the quality and standards of academic provision as specified in the Terms of Reference below.

d) The Board of Directors, or by delegation from the Board of Directors the Chief Executive, shall seek the prior approval of the Academic Council where, under these Regulations, the Academic Council is required to give its approval.

e) The Board of Directors, or by delegation from the Board of Directors the Chief Executive, shall provide such assistance to the Academic Council as is required for the Academic Council to carry out its responsibilities for exercising a broad oversight over academic operations including the implementation of academic policies, academic regulations and academic procedures, and the Board of Directors shall take due account of reports from the Academic Council on its findings and consequential recommendations.

f) The Board recognises that under company law it remains legally responsible for the School and any decision taken on its behalf. It also recognises that commercial pressures may abut or conflict with the protection of academic standards and quality. In consequence it gives an undertaking to inform its regulatory bodies within 10 working days of any action or decision which reduces the powers or authority of the Academic Council over academic standards and quality.

Terms of Reference

1. The Academic Council shall be the academic authority of the London Interdisciplinary School and shall take such measures and act in such a manner as shall best promote the academic and professional work of the School and safeguard the integrity and standards of its awards.

2. When consulted by the Board of Directors or, by delegation from the Board of Directors by the Chief Executive, the Academic Council shall advise the Board of Directors of the School generally on matters of an academic and professional educational character. In so doing its advice shall be informed by recognised and accepted academic and professional standards both of relevant professional bodies and of UK higher education.

3. The Academic Council shall give advice or make recommendations to the Board on the following in relation to the School:
   - the educational character and objectives of the School;
   - the establishment and closure of programmes;
   - the strategy for academic risk and change management;
   - the establishment and approval of partnerships and service agreements;
   - agreements with other validating, accrediting or awarding bodies;
   - Compliance with
   - the Equality Act 2010;
   - the OfS Regulatory Framework;
   - the UK Quality Code for Higher Education;
   - the Competition and Markets Authority - Higher education: consumer law advice for providers;
   - the Prevent Duty.

4. The Academic Council shall have the power to:
a. determine and approve the academic governance and management framework for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities;

b. establish and approve academic policy and regulations governing the student life cycle, including:
   - student admission, retention and achievement;
   - programme design, validation, monitoring, review and amendment;
   - the quality of programme delivery and support;
   - closure of programmes and modules of study;
   - assessment of students.

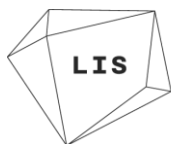c. recommend the titles of awards and recommend conferment of these awards;

d. establish academic governance instruments to assure effective oversight of the standards and quality of the School's provision;

e. implement strategy and instruments in seeking and maintaining OfS registration and degree awarding powers and their renewal;

f. approve the quality assurance procedures which will be used to maintain academic standards;

g. maintain oversight over operational practice in the implementation of academic policy, academic regulations and quality management procedures, and to report with recommendations, as appropriate to the Board of Directors, including by reviewing annual reports on:
- an annual overview report of quality and standards of the programme, drawing upon the range of quality instruments and mechanisms employed by the School, from which a judgement shall be drawn as to the confidence Academic Council may have in the academic standards of its awards, and identifying areas for attention; and,
- an annual report on the character of the academic community of the School judged against the criteria set out in the OfS Regulatory Framework and plans for staff development and enhancement; and,
- a summary report on the scholarship and pedagogic effectiveness of staff; and,
- a summary report on the outcomes and action plans from annual programme monitoring; and,
- a summary report on the findings and action plans from external examiners; and,
- a summary report on student recruitment, admissions and induction; and,
- a summary report on student retention, progression and achievement; and,
- a summary report on the operation and monitoring of student services; and,
- a summary report on applications for complaints, concessions and appeals.

h. agree areas of academic provision for internal audit as part of the Rolling Internal Audit Programme, to agree the contents and timings of that programme, and to review any reports arising out of the programme. Where an audit has been conducted the Academic Council shall report its findings to the Board of Directors and shall advise on any appropriate action;

i. review annually its own effectiveness as a body in upholding the School's academic quality and standards.

j. delegate operational functions and establish sub committees and working groups of the Academic Council with such terms of reference and reporting requirements as the Academic Council shall determine;

5. Where the majority of academic staff do not sit on the Academic Council, the Council shall periodically consult academic staff on the development of the School's programme and assessment framework.

Version Control

Name of policy/procedure:	Academic Council: Membership and Terms of Reference
Document owner:	A. Redford, Head of Quality
Related documents: (eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)	Governance Overview Board of Directors: Membership and Terms of Reference Academic Appeals Board: Membership and Terms of Reference Programme/Module Review and Approval Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference Board of Examiners: Membership and Terms of Reference Academic Misconduct Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference Admissions Decision Committee: Membership and Terms of Reference Student Voice Committee: Membership and Terms of Reference Fit and Proper Persons Arrangements Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures

Version Control				
Version	Author	Date & Approval	Brief summary of changes	Effective
1	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	13/01/2019	Original draft	
2	Prof. Chris Maguire (Registrar)	14/02/2019	Input on membership and TORs	
3	Jasper Joyce (Director of Finance and Operations)	23/02/2019	Minor wording changes	
4	Ed Fidoe (Chief Executive)	23/02/2019	Minor wording changes	
5	Prof. Carl Gombrich (Director of Teaching and Learning)	10/03/2019	Clarification on appointed members and on terms of reference relating to internal audit	
6	Prof. Chris Maguire (Registrar)	9/07/2019	Clarification of how AC will have academic independence from the Board of Directors	
7	Board of Directors	12/07/2019	Approved	
8	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	17/07/2019	Included reference to role of validating partner, including attendance of certain meetings by a representative and role of ratification of progression and classification recommendations	

9	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	23/07/2019	Inclusion of Registrar on Academic Council. Removed power of veto of external member to preserve institutional autonomy and responsibility. Adapted no. of independent members on AC to 1-2	
10	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	02/10/2019	Reduced scope of CEO role on Academic Council	
11	Academic Council	18/11/2019	Requires updated in light of decision to pursue NDAPs	
12	Academic Council	16/03/2020	Approved	
13	Hannah Kohler (Dir. Strategy & Special Projects)	15/06/2021	Changed titles of ex officio members to reflect changes in org structure. Dir. Student Experience, Dir. Strategy & Special Projects, Head of Admissions & WP now in place of Dir. Careers and Networks, Dir. of Widening Participation and Dir. of Admissions & Student Experience. Dir Finance & Operations replaced by Dir. New Products (responsible for MASC). Head of Quality added as ex officio role	2021-2022
14	Draft	Nov 2021	Addition of PG student rep	
15	A. Redford, Head of Quality	Academic Council: 13/09/2022	Change in role titles, expansions to no more than 30 members, inclusion of student rep at each level	2022-2023 onwards
16	A. Redford, Head of Quality	Academic Council: 14/09/2023	Amendment to role title	2023-2024 onwards
17	A. Redford, Head of Quality	Chair of Academic Council	Removal of Chief Experience Officer, change of title from DoTL to Dean	2023-2024 onwards