Boards of Studies: Purpose, Constitution and Terms of Reference

1. **Requirements for Boards of Studies**

All the following categories of taught provision must be assigned to an appropriate Board of Studies:

- Undergraduate programmes leading to degree, diplomas or certificates;
- Postgraduate programmes leading to degrees, diplomas or certificates;
- Programmes of research training, whether leading to degrees, diplomas or certificates or otherwise;
- Non-award-bearing courses offered as part of vocational or non-vocational continuing education, whether operating within a credit accumulation and transfer framework or otherwise;
- Any other non-award-bearing academic courses offered to staff, students or members of the public.

In some departments a single Board of Studies may be responsible for all the taught provision, but in others there may be several Boards of Studies, covering different types of taught provision, groups of programmes or even individual programmes. Each Head of Department/School is responsible to the Board of the appropriate Faculty for ensuring that all taught provision ‘owned’ by his/her Department/School is assigned to an appropriate Board of Studies and, where there is more than one Board of Studies in a Department/School, for ensuring that staff and students are informed of the allocation of programmes and other taught provision between those Boards of Studies.

Where a programme is offered jointly or severally by two or more Departments/Schools the programme must be allocated to a Board of Studies in the Department/School which ‘owns’ that programme (and the Head of that Department/School shall have responsibility for that programme), but there shall be appropriate representation on the Board from the contributing Departments/Schools.

Where a module or other element of provision is offered in a number of programmes and those programmes relate to more than one Board of Studies, the Head of the Department/School which ‘owns’ the module shall be responsible to the Board of the appropriate Faculty for allocating primary responsibility for the module to one Board of Studies. That Board of Studies shall then be responsible for ensuring that information relating to that module/element of provision and to its monitoring and evaluation is available to assist other Boards of Studies in the exercise of their responsibilities.
2. Constitutions of Boards of Studies

Boards of Studies shall be constituted as follows:

a) The Head(s) of Department(s)/School(s) offering modules contributing to the award bearing programmes covered by the Board of Studies – *ex officio*;

b) The Directors of studies for the award-bearing programmes covered by the Board of Studies – *ex-officio*;

c) The Academic Co-ordinators for the non-award-bearing programmes covered by the Board of Studies – *ex-officio*;

d) The Dean(s) of the Faculties which have responsibility for the programmes of study covered by the Boards of Studies – *ex-officio*;

e) The members of staff teaching on the programmes of study covered by the Board of Studies in any one academic year, whether full or part-time, permanent or fixed-term – or representatives elected by that group in a manner to be approved by the Dean(s) of the Faculty/ies concerned, provided that, where a representative structure is used, all other members of staff teaching on the programmes shall have a right to attend and to speak but not to vote;

f) One or more representatives of the students registered on the programmes of study covered by the Board of Studies to be elected on an annual basis in a manner to be approved by the Dean(s) of the Faculty/ies concerned;

g) Such other persons from inside or outside the University whom the Board may wish to co-opt on an annual basis;

h) The quorum for a Board of Studies shall be one-third of the full membership or three members, whichever is the greater.

Members in categories (b), (c), (e), (f) and (g) shall have a duty to attend meetings; members in (a) and (d) shall have a right to attend meetings. The Head of Department/School shall annually appoint a Chairperson and a Secretary for each Board of Studies from among the members in categories (b), (c) and (e).

3. Terms of Reference

Boards of Studies shall have the following terms of reference:

Terms of Reference for the *[insert name]* Board of Studies

The *[insert name]* Board of Studies shall be responsible to the Head of the Department/School of *[insert name]* in respect of the following taught provision:

*[List programmes and/or other taught provision covered by the Board of Studies]*
The [insert name] Board of Studies shall:

a) be responsible to the Head of the Department/School of [insert name] for overseeing the operation and management of each of the above-named programmes of study and other taught provision;

b) meet at least three times per academic year;

c) ensure that staff, applicants, students, external examiners and other relevant groups are provided with accurate information about the above-named programmes of study and other taught provision their component parts and, in particular, about the assessment of the programme;

d) receive reports of external examiners for each of the above-named programmes and other taught provision and recommend any action to be taken as a consequence;

e) ensure that effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place for each of the above-named programmes and other taught provision, including means of obtaining feedback from students, graduates, employers, sponsors and any professional accreditation bodies, as appropriate;

f) receive reports on the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation of the above-named programmes and decide on any action to be taken as a consequence;

g) ensure that effective mechanisms are in place for staff/student consultation for each of the above-named programmes;

h) discuss matters concerning individual applicants or students and decide on any action to be taken as a consequence – members in category (f) shall be excluded from any such discussion;

i) keep under review whether there is a continuing need for each programme of study and other element of taught provision listed above;

j) make recommendations concerning any proposed new programme of study or modules or any proposed modifications to the programmes of study listed above, including amendments to their means of assessment;

k) promote a continuing discussion of effective means of learning and teaching and of mechanisms for enhancing learning and teaching;

l) advise on any resource issues which have a direct impact on the programmes of study or other taught provision for which the Board of Studies is responsible;

m) liaise with other Boards of Studies where necessary to ensure the discharge of their respective duties;
n) carry out such other functions as may from time to time be determined and discuss such other matters as are relevant to the programmes of study for which the Board is responsible.

These terms of reference shall be circulated to all members of the Board of Studies at the start of each academic year.

4. Reporting Relationship

Each Board of Studies shall report to the Head of the Department/School which ‘owns’ the provision for which it is responsible and the decisions of the Board shall be subject to ratification by that Head of Department/School who shall be provided with copies of the minutes of the Board by the Chair as soon as possible after meetings of the Board. Matters and recommendations which require consideration at Faculty level shall be contained in a separate report which will also be subject to ratification by the Head of the Department/School before being forwarded to the Faculty. The Head of the Department/School shall also be responsible for ensuring that the Heads of other Departments/Schools contributing to the programmes/provision are informed/consulted about all relevant matters relating to the programmes/provision. S/he shall have no power to commit other Heads of Departments/Schools to any action related to the provision contributed by those Departments/Schools to the programme(s), but, in the event of disagreements/difficulties, the Dean(s) of the appropriate Faculty/ies shall be required to adjudicate.

Each Board of Studies shall have formal agenda sheets, agenda papers and minutes and shall make them available for consultation in the relevant Faculty Offices. Any material relating to individual applicants or students shall be reserved business, appearing in a separate section of the agenda and minutes and not made available for consultation in Faculty Offices. Minutes shall not be provided to the Faculty Office until they have been ratified by the Head of the Department/School.

5. Faculty-owned Programmes

In the case of programmes of study or provision which are ‘owned’ by a Faculty e.g. the BVSc programme, the Dean of the Faculty shall take the place of the Head of the Department/School.