

# A3 – ACADEMIC BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE



## 1 PURPOSE

The policy outlines the purpose and responsibilities of BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education’s (BBI-TAITE) Academic Board.

## 2 BACKGROUND

BBI-TAITE is committed to quality learning and teaching, as reflected in its educational mission. These Terms of Reference are intended to ensure high quality academic governance of the Institute’s courses of study, units, systems and processes.

## 3 RATIONALE

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority’s standards require that the higher education provider’s corporate governance arrangements demonstrate:

- a clear distinction between governance and management responsibilities [HESF 3.3];
- a clear and discernible separation between corporate and academic governance, including properly constituted academic board and course advisory committees [HESF 3.7];
- the effective development, implementation and review of policies for all aspects of the higher education provider’s academic activities including delivery of the higher education provider’s courses of study by other entities [HESF 3.8];
- the maintenance of academic standards, with appropriate mechanisms for external input, in accordance with international conventions for good academic practice [HESF 3.8]; and
- effective quality assurance arrangements for all the higher education provider’s higher education operations, encompassing systematic monitoring, review and improvement [HESF 3.8].<sup>1</sup>

## 4 DEFINITIONS

The *TEQSA Glossary of terms* provide the following definitions/core roles and responsibilities of the bodies having carriage of institutional governance:

- ▶ **Governing body** – the body with ultimate decision-making authority over the higher education provider and its operations.
- ▶ **Academic governance** – a subset of the overall governance of a higher education provider. Academic governance deals with the framework that regulates providers’ academic decisions and quality assurance. Academic governance includes the policies, processes, definitions of roles, relationships, systems, strategies and resources that ensure academic standards and continuous improvement in academic activities. It is concerned with the integrity and quality of the core higher education activities of teaching, research and scholarship.

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<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Standards Framework. *Section 3 Corporate and academic governance*. Online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2013C00169>. Accessed 13 April 2020

- ▶ **Executive management** (chief executive officer and other senior executives and managers, including executive deans/deans/academic directors and heads of schools/departments) – implementing policies, programs and processes, including through decisions about staffing, budgets, infrastructure, etc. Its ultimate responsibility and accountability is to the corporate governing body for effective implementation of both corporate and academic objectives.<sup>2</sup>

## 5 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Academic Board is established by BBI-The Australian Institute of Theological Education Board (the BBI-TAITE Board) as the peak body for academic governance of the Institute. All academic bodies in the Institute report to the Academic Board.

The Academic Board, either itself or through its subcommittees, shall carry out the following functions:

1. Exercise academic governance of the Institute on behalf of the BBI-TAITE Board through effective academic oversight of quality outcomes in learning, teaching, research and research training [HESF 6.3.1 (a)];
2. Establish and maintain academic leadership at an institutional level, consistent with the types and levels of higher education offered by the Institute [HESF 6.3.1 (c)];
3. Set institutional best practice benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes and monitor action to improve performance of these [HESF6.3.1 (b) and HESF 6.3.2(e)];
4. Develop, monitor and review academic policies and procedures and oversee and evaluate their effectiveness [HESF 6.3.2 (a)];
5. Critically scrutinise, review and approve courses and units of study underpinned by sustained, current and coherent bodies of scholarship which reflect the Institute’s educational mission, and fulfil relevant accreditation authority requirements [HESF 6.3.2 (c)];
6. Ensure that ‘educational policies and practices support participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures’ [HESF 6.2.1 (g)];
7. Develop and maintain a culture of engagement with open, independent and intellectual inquiry by its faculty and students, including sustained and published research [HESF 6.1.4];
8. Maintain oversight of academic and research integrity and monitor potential risks [HESF6.3.2 (d)];
9. Maintain oversight of compliance to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (NHMRC 2007, updated 2018), and the *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies* (2012);
10. Monitor the occurrence and nature of formal complaints, misconduct, academic or research integrity breaches, and the action taken to address the underlying causes [HESF 6.2.1 (j)];
11. Critically evaluate the effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations [HESF 6.3.2 (f)];
12. Evaluate the effectiveness of institutional monitoring, review and improvement of academic activities [HESF 6.3.2 (g)];

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<sup>2</sup> TEQSA. *Glossary of terms*. Located Online at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/glossary-terms>. Accessed 13 April 2020.

13. For those students who have satisfied their respective course requirements, recommend to the BBI-TAITE Board the list of graduates for BBI-TAITE awards;
14. Provide appropriate and competent advice to the BBI-TAITE Board concerning academic matters, quality of teaching, learning, research, research training, and policies and practices [HESF6.3.10 (d)];
15. Ensure the development and implementation of academic courses, units, policies, procedures and systems work to uphold and align with the Objectives of the Company; and
16. The Academic Board has other functions that may be needed to allow it to carry out the roles and responsibilities defined in clause 5, including the appointment of sub-committees of Academic Board. The functions of each subcommittee of Academic Board are set out in the Membership and Terms of Reference of each subcommittee.

## **6 MEMBERSHIP**

### **6.1 Ex-Officio Members**

Membership of the Academic Board will consist of the following Institute Ex-Officio members:

- Academic Dean (Presiding Officer)
- Deputy Principal (Deputy Presiding Officer)
- CEO & Principal
- Registrar (Secretariat)
- Associate Dean – Research
- Head of Theological Studies
- Head of Religious Education
- Head of Leadership & Theology
- Head of Governance and Canon Law

### **6.2 Appointed and Elected Members**

The following will be appointed or elected members to the Academic Board:

**6.2.1 External Members:** Up to three external members with expertise in areas such as higher education teaching and learning, research, quality assurance, human research ethics, community engagement, and student services and/or administration.

**6.2.2 Student Members:** Up to two student members elected by the student body.

**6.2.3 Academic Teaching Staff:** Up to two academic teaching staff elected by the teaching faculty of the Institute. They shall comprise:

- one full-time or fractional appointment; and
- one sessional appointment.

### **6.3 Right of Audience and Debate**

An appointed representative of the BBI-TAITE Board may have right of audience and debate at all Academic Board meetings.

## 7. PROCEDURES

### 7.1 MEMBERSHIP

- 7.1.1 External Members:** All external members of the Academic Board will be appointed by the BBI-TAITE Board on the recommendation of the Principal and CEO;
- 7.1.2 Term of Appointment:** All appointed positions will be for a three-year term on rotation and will be eligible for one further three-year term;
- 7.1.3 Voting:** All members of the Academic Board will be voting members;
- 7.1.4 Student Members:** Elected student member/s shall be at least second year students and will be elected for a two-year term – where two members are elected, they shall be rotating appointments.
- 7.1.5 Academic Staff Members:** Elected academic staff members shall be in their second year or greater of employment with BBI-TAITE. The academic staff member elected from the full-time or fractional staff shall be elected for a three-year term. The academic staff member elected from the sessional academic staff shall be elected for a one-year term. Both full-time/fractional and sessional elected members may seek a further term of office.
- 7.1.6 Termination of Membership:** If an appointed member is absent for two or more meetings in a row, without notification to the Presiding Officer accompanied with a valid reason for their absence, they may be asked to show cause as to why their membership of the Academic Board should continue.
- 7.1.7 Casual Vacancies:** The Presiding Officer will request the Academic Board Standing Committee to address casual vacancies which may occur from time to time on the Academic Board, proposing replacement members for the remainder of the term of office of the vacant position.

### 7.2 MEETINGS

- 7.2.1 Frequency:** The Academic Board will meet at least four times a year;
- 7.2.2 Additional meetings:** Additional meetings may be called by the Presiding Officer with reasonable notice;
- 7.2.3 Agenda and papers:** Agenda and papers will be distributed at least one week in advance of meetings;
- 7.2.4 Late papers:** Late papers will be distributed only with the approval of the Presiding Officer, and considering members' availability to read the documents within a reasonable timeframe;
- 7.2.5 Quorum:** The quorum for a meeting is 50% of membership;
- 7.2.6 Voting:** The Academic Board should achieve a reasonable consensus as determined by the Presiding Officer. If a vote is deemed necessary by the Presiding Officer, in the case of an equality of votes, the Presiding Officer, in addition to her or his deliberative vote, has a casting vote.

### 7.3 ELECTION OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The student representatives to Academic Board are elected by the students by confidential ballot conducted by the Registrar. Student representatives must:

- be enrolled in a current course of study with BBI-TAITE;
- be in their second or higher year of study with the Institute;
- be able to represent the general needs of students without promoting personal agendas or bias; and
- agree to confidentiality concerning Academic Board discussions and decisions.

## 7.4 ELECTION OF ACADEMIC STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

The academic staff representatives to Academic Board are elected by the full-time, fractional, and sessional academic staff of the Institute by confidential ballot conducted by the Registrar. Staff representatives must:

- be current teaching staff of the Institute;
- have been employed by the Institute for more than one year;
- be able to represent the general needs of academic staff without promoting personal agendas or bias; and
- agree to confidentiality concerning Academic Board discussions and decisions.

## 8 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act) as amended.

## 9 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

All policies classified as Academic in the BBI-TAITE policy matrix.

## 10 NOTES

Contact Officer	Principal and Chief Executive Officer
Implementation Officer/s	Academic Dean
Approval Authority / Authorities	Academic Board / BBI-TAITE Board of Directors
Date Approved	
Date of Commencement	
Date for Review	24 months
Amendment History	<p>Draft revised on 10/10/16 with BBI-TAITE Board revisions from 28/09/16 and “Up to two student representatives” under membership, as revised by the Executive Leadership Team on 04/10/16</p> <p>29/03/17 – “Election of Student Representatives” section added to outline process of nomination and election (pg.3)</p> <p>04/06/2019 – amended to reflect BBI-TAITE current structure</p> <p>13/05/2020 – amended to include definitions, HESF Standards and Guidelines, student representatives, staff representatives, and allow the Academic Board to form sub-committees of the Board, plus other minor amendments to reduce duplication, to clarify wording, and to bring wording to plain and simple English.</p>
Key Stakeholders	<p>BBI-TAITE Board</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Academic Board Standing Committee</p> <p>Academic Dean</p> <p>Deputy Principal</p> <p>Faculty &amp; Sessional Academics</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Higher Education Partners</p>