

ACADEMIC BOARD CHARTER

1. Authority

The Academic Board (AB) of Academies Australasia Polytechnic (AAPoly) is established by the AAPoly Board of Directors (BOD) as part of its discharge of responsibilities to ensure effective oversight and management of academic governance requirements as specified by the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021. The AB operates independently of the BOD in providing advice on all academic matters to the BOD. This Charter was authorised by the BOD on 24 October 2022.

2. Definitions and abbreviations

<i>AAPoly</i>	<i>Academies Australasia Polytechnic</i>
<i>AB</i>	<i>Academic Board</i>
<i>BOD</i>	<i>Board of Directors</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>
<i>HESF</i>	<i>Higher Education Standards Framework</i>
<i>TEQSA</i>	<i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority</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 Academic Board

The AB is responsible for establishing and overseeing a competent academic governance system to ensure the quality of delivery of the HE programs offered by AAPoly. The AB closely monitors and scrutinises the course design and academic delivery of HE programs and the performance of the academic team. The AB sets academic standards and provides regular reports to the BOD that these standards are appropriate and continuously scrutinised and improved.

4. Activities

The AB discharges its academic governance responsibilities through activities which include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Providing effective academic leadership, supporting scholarship and upholding the pursuit of free intellectual enquiry;
2. Establishing and maintaining processes to ensure academic integrity;
3. Overseeing the development and review of existing and proposed HE courses and programs, and making recommendations to the BOD for approval;
4. Setting, monitoring, analysing, reporting on and documenting institutional academic standards and benchmarks, including admissions, academic credit, teaching and learning, assessment (including grading), staffing, scholarship, learning resources and educational support;
5. Analysing and evaluating student achievement, and initiating actions to improve performance;
6. Fostering educational innovation;

7. Taking responsibility for the maintenance of the quality of teaching and learning, by overseeing the internal quality assurance arrangements, external benchmarking, and independent peer review;
8. Providing expert advice to the BOD on corporate decision making in relation to academic matters, including educational outcomes, policies and practices;
9. Ensuring only fully qualified candidates are recommended to the BOD for HE awards, and being responsible for the terms and granting of other awards, scholarships and forms of recognition for academic progression and achievements;
10. Developing, monitoring and regularly reviewing academic policies and procedures to ensure they are effective, consistent with best practice, and compliant with regulatory standards, frameworks, and relevant legislation;
11. Providing advice on non-academic matters which may impact student achievement, including facilities and infrastructure, diversity and equity, student wellbeing and safety and educational support;
12. Taking responsibility for the formulation, implementation and review of academic and educational plans, systems and processes, consistent with the AAPoly Strategic Plan;
13. Identifying, minimising, mitigating and managing academic risks; and
14. Undertaking evaluations of academic governance effectiveness.

5. Reporting and relationships

The AB regularly reports on its activities to the BOD.

The BOD will determine the reports, and frequency, required to be presented by the AB, and these will be reflected in the AB minutes and agenda.

The AB may generate and dissolve standing committees or working groups to discharge its responsibilities.

Standing Committees or Working Groups may be established through a resolution of the AB. The BOD shall be advised of the Terms of Reference of any Standing Committee.

The AB may also co-opt persons with relevant expertise whose input will assist the AB in its work, subject to budgetary approval by the BOD. This will include discipline experts and industry and professional specialists, especially for course design and review. These persons may attend AB but shall not become AB members unless appointed by the BOD.

The AB works closely with the BOD and CEO to ensure all its activities are adequately resourced to enable it to fulfil its duties and obligations.

Any member of the BOD may attend any meeting of the AB or its Standing Committees.

6. Student Participation in Academic Governance

Student contribution to Academic Governance is sought through their participation in Student Focus, Groups allowing them to provide feedback and their views on all academic matters, including:

- Admissions
- Credit and recognition of prior learning
- Orientation
- Learning outcomes and assessment
- Facilities and infrastructure
- Diversity and equity
- Wellbeing and safety

- Student grievances
- Course design
- Staffing
- Learning resources and education support
- Academic integrity

The Student Focus Groups are organised each semester and led by the CEO who also collects and presents the findings and recommendations to the AB for consideration. AB and BOD members may be invited by the CEO to participate.

7. Membership

7.1 Membership

7.1a. The BOD shall appoint all the members of the AB, who may be internal or external, and shall decide on numbers, tenure, remuneration, who shall be Chair, and who shall be Deputy Chair if a deputy is to be appointed.

7.1b. Core membership shall include the Academic Dean, Associate Dean (non-voting), a representative of the teaching staff, a representative from the Sydney academic team (non-voting), a senior compliance manager, the CEO (non-voting) and a representative of the BOD (non-voting).

7.1c. Other member(s) of the AB, including the Chair (and Deputy Chair if a deputy is to be appointed), shall have expertise in academic governance.

7.2 Appointment and terms

7.2a. Internal members of the AB, defined as members of the AB who are separately engaged by AAPoly or any related company, are not entitled to additional remuneration for their responsibilities on the AB.

7.2b. External members, also appointed by the BOD, are normally appointed for a period of two years (in the first instance) on terms agreed with the BOD. That appointment may, at the discretion of the BOD, be extended subject to total tenure (inclusive of the first period of engagement) not exceeding six years.

7.3c. Other than in exceptional cases, external members must hold a PhD.

7.3 When membership ceases

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

- resigns from the AB;
- no longer holds the relevant position that entitles the person to be on the AB;
- 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 AB, and has not been given leave by the Chair; or
- is removed from office.

7.4 Profile of AB Members

The AB is a combination of a representative and a skills/attributes based board, collectively holding significant skills and expertise in academic governance. The principle guiding all appointments is whether the person can contribute to the effective and efficient work of the AB in the discharge of its duties and obligations.

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. Conflicts of interest that may interfere with this capacity are called for at every meeting.

7.5 General requirements for members

The enabling attributes and skills categories, that all appointees 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.
- Well established networks in HE and relevant employment sectors.
- Knowledge and understanding of current and future trends in the HE 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 contacts with a relevant network of individuals and organisations.
- Other than in exceptional cases, external members must hold a PhD.

7.6 Chair of the AB

The BOD shall appoint a Chair of the AB who will have the following attributes and skills:

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

The Chair of the AB:

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

7.7 Secretariat

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

- provide administrative support and resources to the AB;
- support the role of the Chair; and
- have specific secretarial functions related to AB meetings (see Section 7.3 here, and Schedule 1 of this Charter).

8. Meetings

8.1 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 AB for the year. Ordinary meetings normally follow these principles.

1. The AB will meet at least five (5) times a year.
2. The quorum for meetings of the AB is 50% of all the voting members , or if the voting membership is an odd number, the number of voting members divided by two, plus one.
3. The Chair (or delegate) will convene all meetings.

4. Dates of the meetings of the AB and its Standing Committees and established Working Groups 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.

8.2 Special meetings

The Chair may at any time convene a special meeting of the AB. The BOD can also request a special meeting. A special meeting will also be arranged if a majority of voting members indicate in writing a request for a special meeting.

8.3 Procedures of meetings

These are general procedural aspects of ordinary meetings of the AB. For further information about the role of Secretary of the AB, see Schedule 1 of this 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 members may inform themselves in any way it finds effective and efficient for its work, including requesting reports from AAPoly staff, working groups or other teams.
3. The Chair determines standing items on the AB agenda, including routine reports such as academic risk and academic integrity.
4. Motions require a proposer and seconder unless introduced by the Chair.
5. Decisions will be the outcome of collegial debate and collaborative intent.
6. When a vote is required, it will be based on a simple majority.
7. No vote may be taken at a meeting in the absence of a quorum.
8. Out-of-meeting decisions may be approved via a circular resolution. A circular resolution only passes when all voting members approve and sign the resolution.
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 AB Secretary will normally take the minutes of the AB.
14. Minutes of meetings must be kept in a secure and accessible place and will be maintained by the Secretary to the AB.
15. In appropriate circumstances the AB 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 special meeting is impractical.

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Details	Author	Version
02012014	Name change from AAPoly to Academies Australasia Polytechnic Change in organisation structure	ET	1.0
02022016	Review of the entire document for clarity and operability	TM	2.0
02022016	Edited by Peter Ryan (external consultant) for TEQSA submission	Peter Ryan/ET	2.1
04022016	Approved by the BOD	ET	2.1
26072017	Recommended changes after External Review by Dr Peter	ET	3.0

	Ryan and approved by the Board of Directors		
27072017	Detailed edit for usability. Addition of Schedule 1 and 2	TM	3.1
01082017	Update editing	TM	3.2
10082017	Update editing, harmonising, appendices	TM	3.3
12082017	Editing	ET	3.4
23082017	Editing	TM	3.5
08092017	Update after BOD review	TM	3.6
24102022	Review of the entire document including the AB activities, structure and membership	JK	4.0
21092023	Updates to membership structure and quorum following discussions at BOD meetings.	JK	4.1

SCHEDULE 1

Duties of the AB Secretary

The duties of the Secretary are vital to the efficient and effective functioning of the AB in the discharge of its role in academic governance. This schedule aims to provide guidance for the work required of the Secretary. In all cases it is expected that if the appointed AB Secretary is absent from duties that a deputy is made available.

The AB Secretary can be expected to:

1. be present at all meetings of the AB;
2. take the minutes of all meetings of the AB;
3. aim to finalise a draft of those minutes within ten business days after the AB meeting for review by the Chair of the AB;
4. create a draft agenda of the upcoming AB meeting one month prior to the upcoming meeting;
5. maintain an “outstanding items” register in a format suitable for the AB, and ensure responsible persons nominated within that register are notified of AB expectations within five business days of the AB meeting;
6. liaise with the “policy registrar” of AAPoly, a month prior to each AB meeting, to check which policies are scheduled for review and which policies are newly finalised, and advise the Chair of the AB for follow up action;
7. send out all notices of meetings and reminders and individual requests for reports on behalf of the AB Chair;
8. ensure a suitable meeting room and facilities are prepared for AB meetings, including technology to enable attendance from a remote location if requested;
9. maintain a correspondence file for the AB;
10. maintain a template document file for the AB;
11. maintain a register of agendas and minutes of the AB;
12. maintain a register of resolutions of the AB;
13. maintain a register of all reports to the AB and from the AB;
14. receive and assist with all inquiries regarding the AB; and
15. assist the Chair of the AB as required.