History of the Academic Board

1 Establishment

The Academic Board was established in August 1990 by the (then) Christchurch Polytechnic Council in accordance with the Education Act 1989 (amended 1990). The Terms of Reference (ToR), membership, Person Specification (for appointing members to the Board) and an Executive Officer position (subsequently changed to Academic Manager and then Director, Academic) were all developed after extensive consultation with staff over a nine month period.

When first established, the body was referred to as the Board of Studies, but given its legal standing, the more formal title of Academic Board was adopted by Council in February 1992.

Subcommittees have been formed as needed and by 2002 the "Board" became known informally as the "Academic Board Executive Committee", with the "Full Board" referring to the Executive Committee plus all of the subcommittees. This informal distinction ceased with the ToR revision (2010).

2 Membership

The Board was chaired initially by the Chief Executive Officer (Mr John Hercus) who held the portfolio of Academic Affairs. In April 1994 Mr John Scott was appointed CEO and delegated responsibility for academic matters, including Chair of the Academic Board, to the Deputy CEO. He retained ex-officio membership on the Board. Towards the end of 2000, when the Deputy CEO position was disestablished, the Chief Executive became the ex-officio Chair, with the Director (Academic) acting as Deputy Chair and Convenor.

Until 1993, all members except the CEO were appointed or nominated according to stated criteria. None was on the Board by virtue of the position held within the institution, although there were membership categories (e.g. Head of Department, Māori representative). In March 1992 membership was increased to include two additional Heads of Department and the Academic Manager and Academic Board Secretary positions were created. In February 1993 two further refinements were made: (i) the Academic Manager's position became ex-officio to the Board, reducing the appointed staff positions to seven and (ii) provision was made to invite an academic from another institution to join the Board as an outside observer/adviser, if desired.

In 1995, the Head of Library/Learning Services became an ex-officio member as well.

In February 2000, in consultation with the Deans of Faculty, the Board agreed that the newly created Faculty Academic Co-ordinators should become members of the Board in their own right. The number of appointed staff members on the Board was therefore reduced to two.

In 2001, membership was confirmed as follows: Chief Executive (ex-officio Chair), Director Academic (Deputy Chair and Convenor), Director Library/Learning Services or other member of the Division, Kaiarahi or delegate, Students' Association representative, one Faculty Academic Co-ordinator per Faculty, one Dean and one Head of School (both by application, selected against the Person Specification), two academic staff members (by application, against the Person Specification) and additional seconded members as required. In 2004, Head of School representation was increased to two.

In 2005, a review of the membership was undertaken, in light of the proposed new Quality Assurance Standard related to Academic Boards (distributed by ITPNZ). In consultation with the Faculty Deans, the number of Deans on the Board was increased to two, with a commitment that each subcommittee would include at least one Dean as well. It was agreed that, at least for the time being, the decision made when the Board was first established (i.e. that the Board would maintain independence from Management Team by not including all Deans) would continue.

In 2010 a review of the membership was undertaken once again as a result of the Academic Division being significantly re-structured, and policy and procedures relating to the design, development and approval of programmes being revised. The inclusion of the Faculty Chairs (the Dean) and each Academic Division Management Team member to the Board signalled the need for increased collaboration between Academic Division and Faculties. The intention of this was to enable improved focus on strategic educational development and delivery.

3   Committees

The Academic Board Executive Committee ("the Board") and the six committees comprised the Full Academic Board from 2002 to 2010. Each committee had its own ToR and specified membership. They were, in order of establishment:

- Academic Procedures (with a Policy Subgroup and an Aegrotat Subgroup)

- Programme Approval

- Academic Research (with a Human Ethics Subcommittee, an Animal Ethics Subcommittee and Research Chairs Group which later replaced the original Academic Research Committee)

- Evaluation and Review

- Degrees Committee (initially the Degree Monitoring Group, a sub-group of the Academic Monitoring Committee which was formally disestablished in 2000; Degrees Committee is now disestablished (Nov 2011).

- Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning (CAPL) Board (operationally under the Student Services and Information Division)

- Foundation Sub-Committee.

The Full Board met at least once each year, with Ara Council members and all Deans also invited.

Note that Faculty Boards, established in 1996, were set up by the Academic Board with specified delegations and responsibilities. Reporting and other operating guidelines for Faculty Boards are set out in a separate policy.

Following the 2010 ToR revision the subcommittees were:
- Academic Research Committee

- Evaluation and Review Committee

- Programme Approval Committee

- Faculty Board Commerce

- Faculty Board Creative Industries

- Faculty Board Health Humanities and Science

- Faculty Board Trades Innovation and Engineering

- Faculty Board Te Puna Wānaka.

Following the 2012 ToR revision the subcommittees are:
- Evaluation and Review Committee

- Programme Approval Committee

- Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee

- Department Board of Studies (8).

4   Delegations

From time to time, the Academic Board formally delegates responsibilities to relevant Committees. In such cases, the Committee is given the power to make decisions under the auspices of the Academic Board structure. The delegations are detailed in the Academic Board Terms of Reference and Academic Delegations Register.

5   Related Structural Developments

A management restructuring exercise, which was initiated by the CEO at the end of 1995, created five Faculties to replace the previous 14 Departments. The membership clause specifying the number of Heads of Department on the Board was therefore changed to read "2 Deans, Associate Deans or Heads of School". In 2001, the number of Faculties was reduced to four (Media Arts being combined with Applied Technology), with 17 Head of School positions. There have been various changes in Faculty number and composition since then. Faculties Membership provisions on the Board and committees has changed with each iteration to reflect the current structure.

In 1996, Management Team established a body called the Education Forum, including all Deans, staff representatives, student representatives, CEO, Deputy CEO and the Division Heads/Centre Managers with an educational portfolio. The purpose was to facilitate fuller discussion on educational direction and priorities than could be done through the Academic Board or full Management Team. This continued for several years until it became obvious that Faculty Boards were meeting some of the identified needs.

In 2001, the Education Strategy Group, a sub-group of Management Team consisting of the CEO, Faculty Deans, Kaiarahi, Director Academic, Director Library/Learning Services, Director Community Education and Dean of Special Projects was set up with focussed terms of reference related to strategic development. Over time this group has shifted focus and increased participation and met monthly during the academic year to discuss strategic educational issues and share good practice. This group ceased operation in 2011.

In 2012 the CE initiated a whole of organisation structure change in order to create a platform to address presenting challenges and the need to improve communications, collaboration and performance management. Ara is now structured into six divisions each with a Director reporting to the CE: Academic, Educational and Applied Research (EAR), Student Services, Corporate Services, Human Resources, Business Development. The Executive are a separate Division which include the Kaiarahi, the CE, Governance and Strategy and Learning Environments. A Chief Executive Reference Group which includes the CE, the directors of Human Resources, Academic, Corporate Services and the Kaiarahi was established to facilitate executive management within the institute. Te Kahui Manukura was formed as a leadership group to overview the development and endorsement of strategic projects, policies and procedures and consists of the CE's Reference Group, the Directors of Divisions, two Heads of Department, two Programme Leaders, and two Managers from Services Divisions.

The EAR Division replaced the faculty structure and is made of the following departments:

- Applied Health and Allied Science
- Business
- Computing
- Creative Industries
- Engineering and Architecture
- Food, Hospitality and Trades
- Humanities
- Nursing and Human Services

The terms school will apply to the areas of Food and Hospitality and Trades until their organisational configuration is further investigated/or determined.

6   Legislation, Purpose and Powers

The Education Act (Section 182(2)) requires that:

> *The Council of an Institution shall establish an Academic Board consisting of the institution's Chief Executive, and members of the staff and students of the institution, to:*
>
> *a) Advise the Council on matters relating to courses of study or training, awards and other academic matters: and*
>
> *b) Exercise powers delegated to it by the Council.*

The Academic Board has no delegated powers from Council at Ara; the academic delegations are to the CE. The responsibility for the operation of the Academic Board is also delegated to the CE. Therefore the Academic Board can only make recommendations to the CEO on these matters.

The Education (Polytechnics) Amendment Act 2009 (Section 222AR(3)) further allows for the establishment of combined Academic Boards by Polytechnic Councils.

> *The combined Board must include:*
>
> a) *The Chief Executive of each of the Polytechnics concerned; and*
>
> b) *At least one member of the staff of each of the polytechnics concerned; and*
>
> c) *At least one student of each of the polytechnics concerned.*

The high level purposes of the Academic Board fall into the following four broad headings:
- Contributing to educational strategy
- Advising Council on academic matters
- Ensuring Academic Quality
- Oversight of research and development

These purposes focus on educational capability and educational delivery.