



POLICY

ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Introduction

The Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997) ¹ stipulates governance structures for public institutions of Higher Education. Although the Act does not make any clear provision for similar structures at private Higher Education institutions, such institutions are nevertheless subject to auditing and accreditation processes commensurate with those at public institutions. This is furthermore complicated by the fact that most private institutions of Higher Education also offer a significant number of Further Education and Training programmes and are therefore also subject to the stipulations of the Further Education Act (no 98 of 1998) ² and the designated Quality Assurance bodies. It is therefore in the interest of private institutions to make provision for structures like those of public institutions but also customised to meet the different governance and management structures of the private institutions, and to take into consideration the needs of both sectors. Fortunately, the stipulated governance structures, as determined by the different Acts, are similar.

Where the governance structures as stipulated by the different Acts take responsibility for the total management of the institutions, the significant difference between such structures and those at private institutions is that academic management can be separated from the business management, provided that the necessary synergies be maintained to protect the integrity of both the academic and the business processes. Therefore, an Academic Governance Structure of a private institution should be structured in such a way that it meets the needs of the institution and the governance structures as set out by the appropriate Acts.

Policy scope

In agreement with various Acts and stipulations, it is the Policy of the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) to institute a compliant and relevant Academic Governance Structure to both adhere to the relevant requirements and provide assistance and guidance to all parties concerned.

Definitions

The Higher Education Act no (101 of 1997)¹ stipulates governance structures for public institutions of Higher Education but is silent on the establishment of similar structures at private higher education institutions. For the sake of this policy document, **Academic Governance** is defined as the structures, policies and procedures put in place to manage and control the academic processes within the constraints of all legislation. It includes maintaining academic standards and adhering to the principles of good teaching and learning.

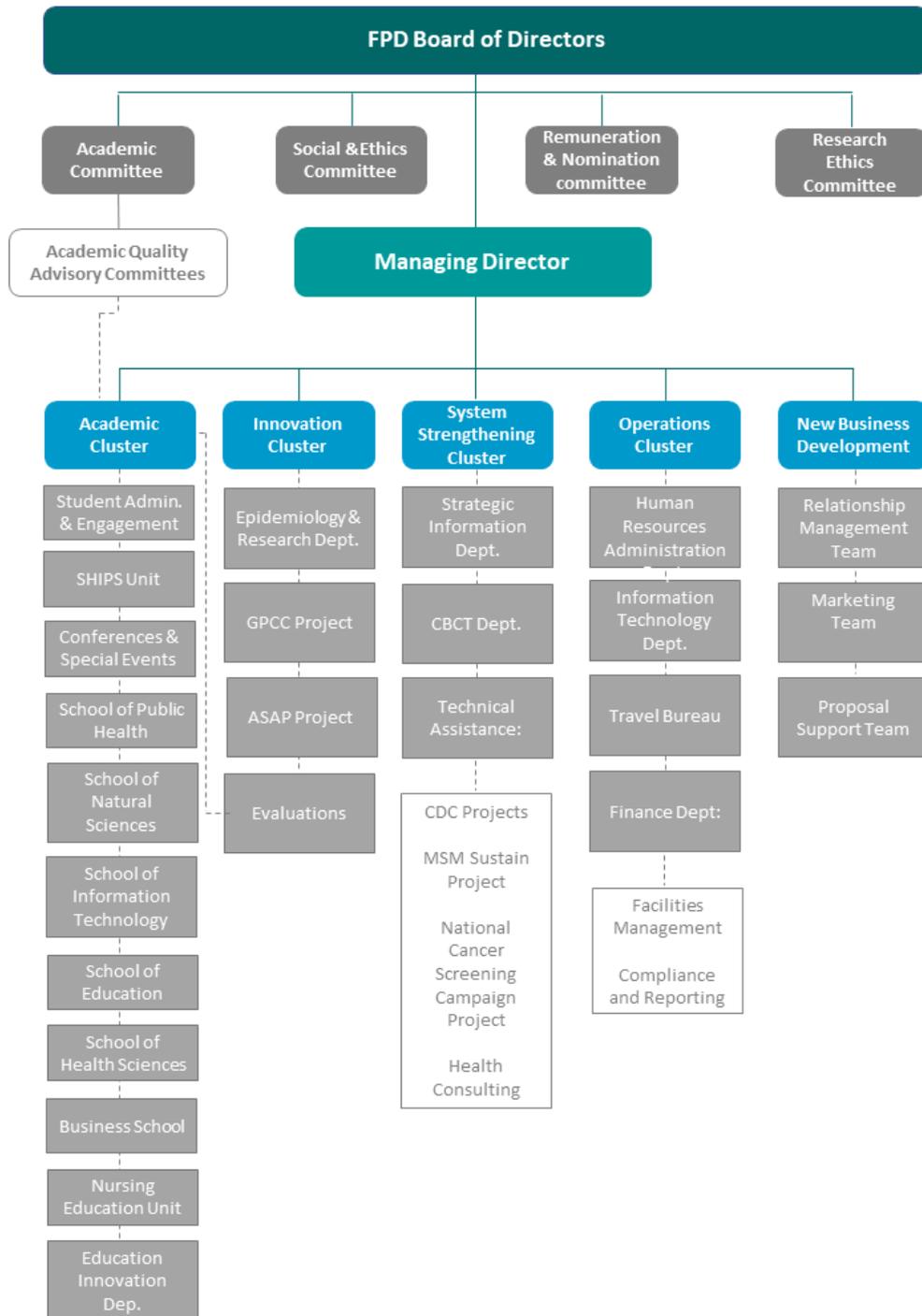
¹ Republic of South Africa. 1997. Higher Education Act Number 101 of 1997. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a101-97.pdf

² Republic of South Africa. 1998. Further Education and Training Act Number 98 or 1998. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a98-98.pdf (This Act has subsequently been replaced by the Further Education and Training Colleges Act (No. 16 of 2006)).

Management Structure

Relevant South African legislation that applies to registered legal entities and private institutions of higher education dictates FPD’s governance structures. Currently, the role of FPD’s Board of Directors is modelled as closely as possible to the King IV Report and recommendations on corporate governance.³

The overall structure as reflected below includes the academic governance structures.



³ <https://www.pwc.co.za/en/publications/king4.html>

Academic Committee

The Academic Committee expresses its commitment to the ideal of active and meaningful participation in all elements of FPD's processes relating to initiating, formulating, revising, assessing, and stipulating educational and academic policies.

The Academic Committee recognises that final authority to approve or reject FPD educational and academic policies, remains with the Board of Directors or their delegated authority. The Academic Committee further recognises that FPD's commitment to high ethical and professional standards and to the promotion of critical inquiry and increased knowledge can be maintained only through responsible interaction and mutual respect. It is in this spirit that the Academic Committee expresses its commitment to work closely with administration in the institution in accordance with policies applicable to all stages of the student journey.

The responsibility of the Academic Committee is any matter relating to the following areas of FPD:

- Teaching and learning.
- Academic Policies and operating procedures.
- Programme and Curriculum Development.
- Assessment.

The Academic Committees Terms of Reference can requested through FPD's Registrar.

Academic Experts, representatives from FPD's Schools, Student Administration and Engagement, as well as Education Innovation (responsible for programme development and quality assurance) are members of the Academic Committee. The Academic Committee provides quarterly feedback to the FPD Board as it is responsible for duties delegated to it by the FPD Board.

Academic and Quality Advisory Committees

FPD is registered as a private higher education institution in terms of Section 54(1)(c) of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997) ¹ and Regulation 16(4)(a) of the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions⁴ (registration certificate number 2002/HE07/013), to offer programmes which are approved by the Registrar in terms of section 53(1)(b) of the Act and Regulation 22(c). FPD is registered to provide distance programmes and its registered qualifications can be found on the [certificate of registration](#) with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). ⁵

To ensure that FPD's policies and principles are consistently implemented in the roll out of its formal registered qualifications and that the qualifications are meeting market needs, an annual Academic and Quality Advisory Committee (AQAC) meeting is held for each qualification.

⁴ Republic of South Africa. 2016. Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions. Available from: <https://www.dhet.gov.za/Private%20Higher%20Education%20Institutions/Regulations%20for%20the%20Registration%20of%20Private%20Higher%20Education%20Institution.%202016.pdf>

⁵ FPD's certificate of registration with DHET can be found here: <https://www.foundation.co.za/documents/certificate/2021%20DHET%20Certificate%20Full%20colour.pdf>

The following matters are discussed by the Committee:

- Regulatory Matters.
- Curriculum.
- Assessment strategy.
- Trends on enrolments and capacity.
- Student progress data.
- Student feedback.
- Potential adjustments.

The AQAC consists of student representatives, faculty representatives, the Head of School, the Registrar, a Student Administrative and Engagement representative, as well as a representative from the Education Innovation Department. This allows for holistic feedback on the qualification and its implementation, in order for decisions on adjustments to be taken.

The Head of School is responsible for convening AQAC meetings, collecting the necessary information to hold the meeting and producing minutes as a record of the proceedings and adjustments that are agreed upon.

Accountabilities

The Academic Committee is responsible for review and approval of this policy on an annual basis. The policy is to be distributed to staff via induction and distributed to students and FPD's community via the website and other publications.