Section 1 – Governance and Approaches to Quality		
Subject:	Background & Contextual Information	
Date Approved by Board of Directors		June 2021
Policy Version	1/2019	**Date due for Revision**	February 2024

Evolution of the College

The Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences (ICHAS) is an independent (voluntary) education provider, specialising in the delivery of higher education programmes. It also offers a range of continuing professional development opportunities. The College was originally known as the National Counselling College of Ireland (NCII). It was retitled the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Institute of Ireland (NCPII) in 2009 because of the introduction of Psychotherapy Programmes at that time. In 2011, with the introduction of programmes outside of Counselling and Psychotherapy, it was renamed the Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences to more accurately reflect the approved scope of provision from HETAC (now QQI).

Mission

The ICHAS mission is to facilitate and enable adult learners to achieve qualifications that are accessible, affordable, relevant to the needs of business, industry and the professions, and that are nationally and internationally recognised. This is secured by a learner centred focus, excellence in our programmes, and innovative delivery.

Vision

The Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences will become a national and international centre of excellence in the fields of higher education, further education and continuing professional development.

Values

The College commits itself to underpin its activities through the values it espouses, namely, to encourage social awareness and responsibility as well as promoting flexibility, maximising opportunities for social inclusivity and accessibility in Higher Education.

Operational Principles

Within the context of its Mission, Vision and Values, the College ensures as far as is practicable that it:

- Recognises and supports the right of students, faculty and staff to enjoy and express freedom of thought and to operate within an ethos of respect and dignity which is free from any form of discrimination.
- Understands education as a fundamental right with associated responsibilities.
- Promotes scholarly and educational activities that are aimed at producing 'thinking practitioners' or knowledgeable 'doers' within the domains of applied sciences and the humanities.

The College seeks to ensure that it:
- Provides the widest possible access to students across all strata of society in a non - discriminatory way.
- Works with other agencies and communities in relevant partnerships for the benefit of society within the domains of applied science and the humanities.
- Develops appropriate partnerships within the academic, social, political and other communities to further the mission of the College and the opportunities for its students.
- Remains committed to the enhancement of society and the optimisation of sustainable development with due cognisance to the environment.

The Legal Status of ICHAS

In relation to its legal status, ICHAS is a Private Limited Company, registered in Ireland (Company Registration Number - 330191) and it is owned by Mr Declan Carey and Prof Denis Ryan, both of whom own 50% shareholding.

Strategic Aims from 2018 to 2022

Building on its Strategic Plan from 2015 to 2017, the strategic aims for the period from 2018 to 2022 are as follows;

1. To consolidate the diversity of learners and growth in learner numbers within a student population of between 600 – 700 students.
2. To continue to develop a suite of relevant academic programmes and career-focused life-long learning alone and in partnership with other HECA Colleges.
3. To enrich the teaching and learning experience for all learners and staff.
4. To employ innovative approaches to programme support and delivery.
5. To strengthen external engagement and public confidence in the College.
6. To advance the governance structure and systems within the College.

Scope of Provision

The range of programmes within the College fall within the following Organisational Units, referred to as Institutes, which are comparable to the traditional departments within Universities and Institutes of Technology. This structure emerged for historical reasons and provides the framework for the future development of the College. While all Institutes are managed by a core management and administrative team, it is envisaged that greater specialization and departmentalization will take place as the suite of programmes expands and resources allow.

The Institutes are the:

- National Counselling and Psychotherapy Institute of Ireland
- National Institute of Childcare and Humanities
- Institute of Open Learning
- The National Institute of Business and Management

The following table identifies the current Programmes offered by ICHAS

Institute	Programme	NFQ Level
National Counselling and Psychotherapy Institute	Certificate in Foundational Skills & Competence in Counselling & Psychotherapy	6
	Certificate in Cultural Competence for Professional Development	6
	Certificate in Supporting Positive Parenting	8
	BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy	8
	BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy with Addiction studies	8
	BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy with Youth Studies	8
	MA in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Person Centred Modalities)	9
	Embedded exit PG Dip in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Person Centred Modalities)	9
	MA in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Integrative Modalities)	9
	Embedded exit PG Dip in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Integrative Modalities)	9
	MA in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Family Therapy)	9
	Embedded exit PG Dip in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Family Therapy)	9
	MA in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Psychodynamic Modalities)	9
	Embedded exit PG Dip in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Psychodynamic Modalities)	9
	MA in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Cognitive Behavioural Modalities)	9
	Embedded exit PG Dip in Counselling & Psychotherapy (Cognitive Behavioural Modalities)	9
	MA in Psychosocial Studies	9
	PG Dip in Psychosocial Studies	9
	Certificate in Technologically Facilitated Therapeutic Engagement 20 ECTS Level 9	9
	MA in Clinical Supervision in Professional Practice	9
	Embedded exit Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Supervision in Professional Practice PG	9
	Certificate in Clinical Supervision in Professional Practice (30 ECTS) Level 9	9
	MA in Addiction Counselling	9
	Programmes due to expire	
	Certificate in Arts in Counselling Studies (Exit Award)	6
	Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling Studies (Exit	6

	Award)	
	BA in Counselling Skills & Psychotherapy Studies	7
	BA in Counselling Skills & Youth Studies	7
	BA in Counselling Skills & Addiction Studies	7
	MA in Counselling & Psychotherapy	9
	MA in Counselling & Pastoral Care	9
	MA in Clinical Supervision in Professional Practice	9
	MA in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy	9
National Institute of Childcare and Humanities	MA in Childhood Studies	9
	MA in Adolescent Studies	9
	PG Dip in Childhood Studies	9
	PG Dip in Adolescent Studies	9
	MA in Childhood & Adolescent Studies	9
Institute of Open Learning	Continuing Professional Development Workshops	
The National Institute of Business and Management		

Figure 1- Scope of Programme Provision

Organisational & Governance Structures

The Sector Specific Guidelines (QQI, 2016) require that the Governance structures are sufficiently robust to support and manage a resource base sufficient to sustainably support the quality assurance system and programmes of education and training, research and related services offered and to manage risk. To this end the College will ensure that all organisational and governance structures will have access to relevant expertise and analytics data on all modes of delivery.

Board of Directors

As indicated, ICHAS is a registered company limited by shares in Ireland (company registration number 330191). Within that context, the shareholding is held by two Shareholders, namely Mr Declan Carey (Company Secretary) and Prof. Denis Ryan. Ultimate responsibility for the Governance of ICHAS rests with the Board of Directors, which comprises these two Shareholders. The Board of Directors decided in 2010 that it wanted to broaden and deepen the expertise available to it in terms of proper governance of a College. It was cognisant that the National Strategy for Higher Education Report to 2030 (p. 92-93) set out principles of recommended Governance structures for Irish Higher Education Institutions. The identification and selection of the members of the Governing Authority was guided by the considerations around composition and size of Governing Authorities in Higher Education contained in the National Strategy for Higher Education Report to 2030 (p. 92-93). That report (albeit in reference to publicly funded institutions) indicated that governance of higher education institutions in Ireland should be shared across the following structures:

- A Governing Authority: the decision- making body;
- A Chief Officer (President/Provost/ Director): the executive management; and
- An Academic Council: representing the academic community.

In 2010, the Board of Directors agreed to establish a Governing Authority to support it in its responsibilities of ensuring good governance and since the establishment of the Governing Authority in 2011, ICHAS has mirrored that structure. The Report also clearly stated that "these three elements are mutually dependent and each plays an important role (P.92) and also that "A Governing Authority cannot, on its own, fulfil the requirement of a company board because it needs the involvement *of senior representatives of the academic community in the governance of the institution for it to be effective. A strong academic board working jointly with the Governing Authority in areas such as strategy and resource allocation brings together the vital constituents of good governance in a university context" (citing* Shattock (2006) *Managing Good Governance in Higher Education* (OUP)[1]).

The same report recognises that the most appropriate governance system for higher education institutions is one that supports institutional autonomy within a clear accountability framework. In that regard, the College has tried to reflect a range of autonomies within its overall governance structures, having a strong Governing Authority with key members who are external offering oversight functions with insights from key societal and academic perspectives. The College has also sought to ensure the autonomy and strong voice of the Academic Community within the College through the inclusion of the Chair of Academic Council and the Vice President (Academic Affairs) on Governing Authority.

It also referred to the fact that the majority of members of a Governing Authority should be lay people with expertise relevant to the governance of higher education. In that regard, the composition of the Governing Authority represents that recommended expertise.

Therefore, while the Board of Directors holds ultimate corporate and legal responsibility for the activities of the College, the Governing Authority, Board of Management as well as the Academic Council are the three principal decision-making bodies within the College. Both the Board of Management and the Academic Council have committees reporting to them, which have defined responsibilities that are published in their terms of references, as have all committees in the College in relation to Quality issues.

Governing Authority
As indicated, the Governance of ICHAS is the delegated responsibility of the Governing Authority. The role of Governing Authority is to provide strategic guidance and to monitor the activities and effectiveness of the management of the College. The Governing Authority supports the College President (Chief Officer) in ensuring that it is stable and in good financial standing, with a reasonable business case for sustainable provision. In that context, The College

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[1] Shattock, M. (2006). *Managing good governance in higher education* (pp. xiii–xiii).

President and the Vice President (Corporate Affairs) report routinely to Governing Authority in terms of financial and organisational sustainability. Likewise, the Vice President (Academic Affairs) reports to GA on issues relating to Academic Affairs, performance and quality.

Chief Officer (President)

The College is managed by the College President, who acts as a central point between Governing Authority on one hand and a broad-based management team (Board of Management) and Academic Council on the other.

Board of Management

The Board of Management supports the College President in the strategic and operational management of the College. The Board of Management makes decisions on all corporate matters of fundamental importance with due cognisance to relevant Irish and European legislation, and in alignment with policies and procedures as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills, QQI and other relevant State agencies. The Board of Management is also responsible for managing risks and reporting to the College President and Governing Authority. This is normally through the Vice President (Corporate Affairs).

Academic Council

Academic Council serves to protect, maintain, and develop the academic standards of the programmes and the activities of the College. Academic Council is, therefore, responsible for the implementation of the academic governance framework and oversees the establishment, maintenance and development of quality assurance policies and procedures for all educational programmes within the College. The Vice President (Academic Affairs) leads the Academic Affairs functions within the College and supports the work of the Independent External Chair of Academic Council. Academic Council reports directly on Academic Affairs to the Governing Authority. All areas of programme development, review and re-validation fall under the remit of Academic Council with specific leadership responsibilities being delegated to the Vice President (Academic Affairs), the Registrar and the Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies. These governance structures and in particular the presence and contribution of the external Chair of Academic Council are designed to ensure that academic decision-making is independent of any commercial considerations or the undue influence of the College owners.

Governance and Management of Quality at ICHAS

All activities within the College are subject to the College's Quality Assurance procedures. All staff undertake a key role in the management and implementation of quality assurance procedures and a collective responsibility for same is distributed across a range of boards and committees. The management of quality assurance and enhancement is designed to ensure the organisational and corporate effectiveness of the College's operations as well as the academic quality of programmes which are deemed to be inter-dependent. Within academic matters, quality assurance and enhancement activities apply at a modular, programme and faculty level. Ultimate responsibility for the approval and monitoring of all Quality Assurance & Enhancement policies and procedures rests with the Academic Council. Quality Assurance procedures are reviewed periodically, and an annual Quality Assurance Report is produced by the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer along with the Registrar and submitted to Academic Council. The Vice President (Academic Affairs) has overall responsibility for academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement and in that function, is supported by members of the Board of

Management and the independent external Chair of Academic Council. The Vice President (Academic Affairs) may convene, as necessary, other groups to address issues concerned with quality assurance and enhancement.

At the level of the individual academic Programmes, Programme Directors monitor academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement supported by Module Leaders/lecturers. Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes, as collectives are the responsibility of the Directors of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Affairs respectively. The principal committee at programme level is the Programme Board, at which a programme or a cognate group of programmes are managed. The Registrar in conjunction with the Programme Directors arrange for Programme Boards, which have student members, to meet at least twice each Semester. At module level, the Module Leader oversees academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement, convening meetings of module leaders/ lecturer at times whereby they can feed into Programme Boards, supported by the Programme Co-ordinators.
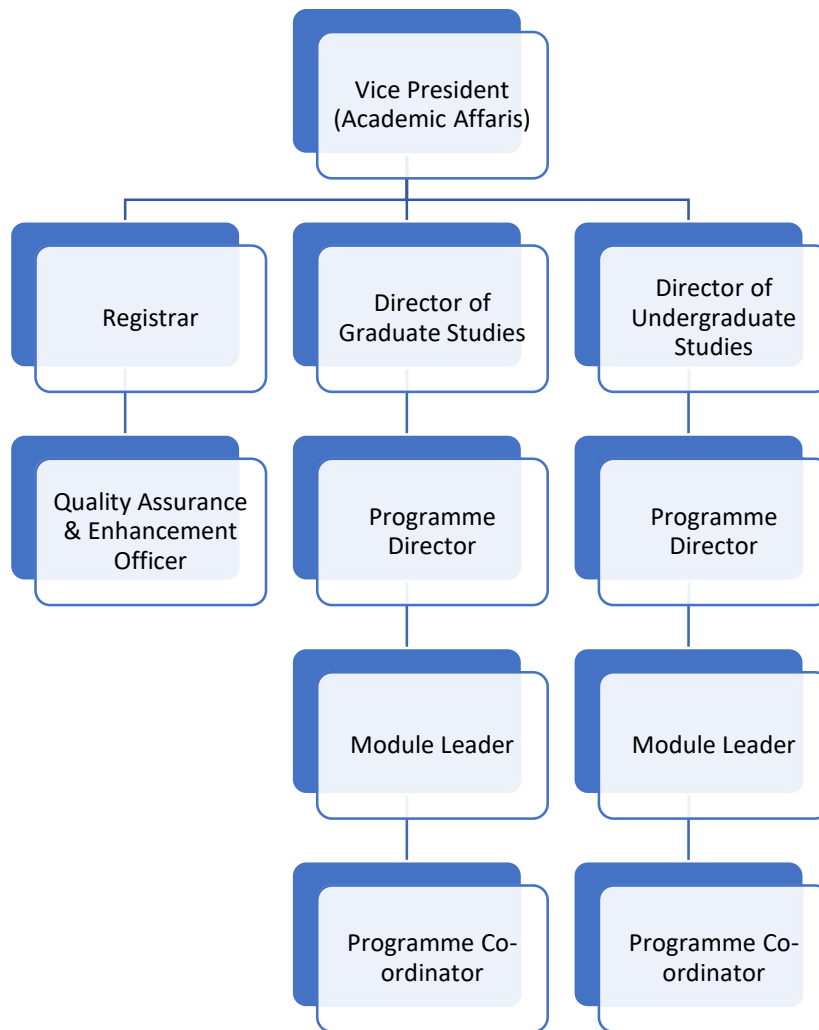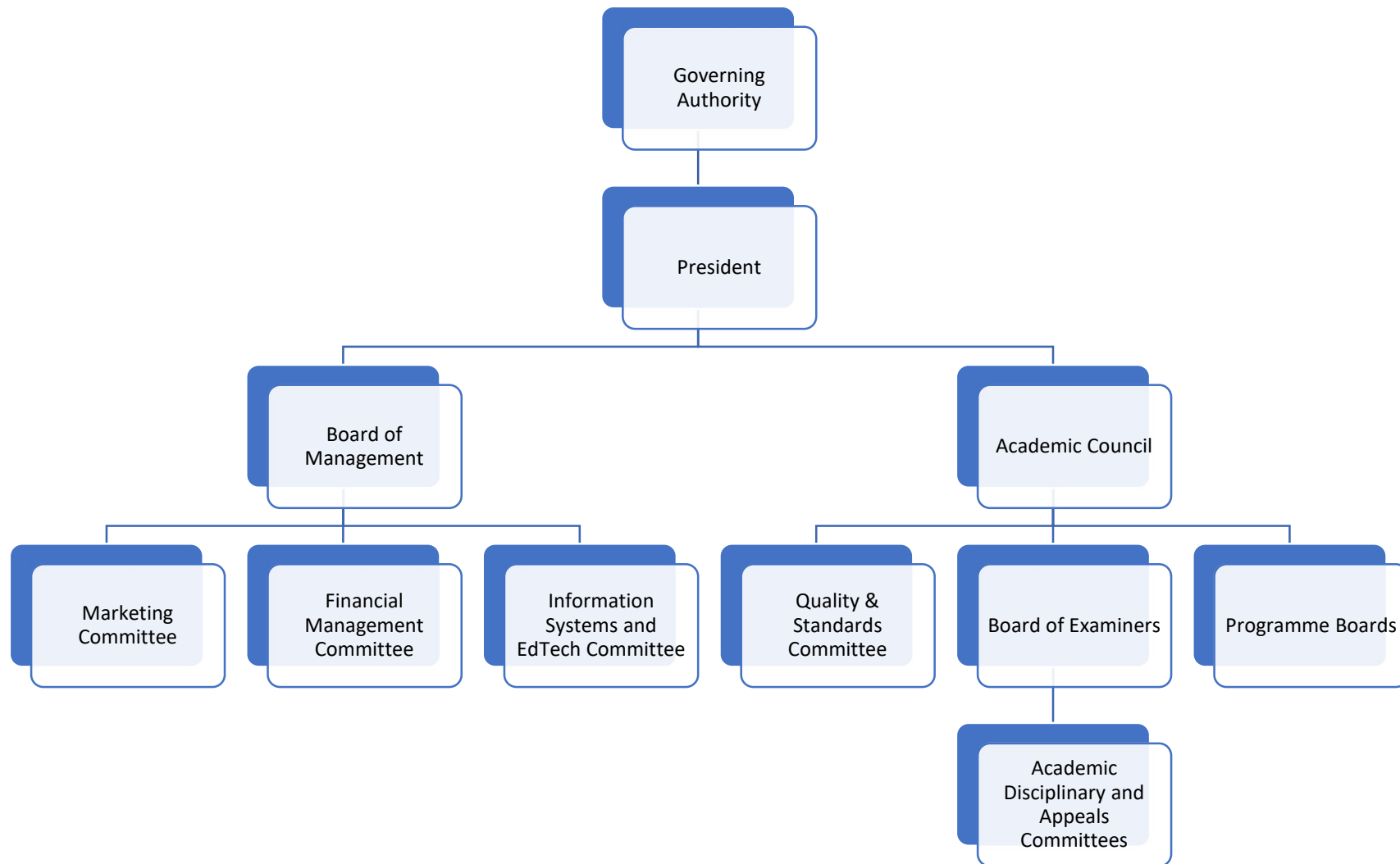
Figure 2 - Academic Governance Structures
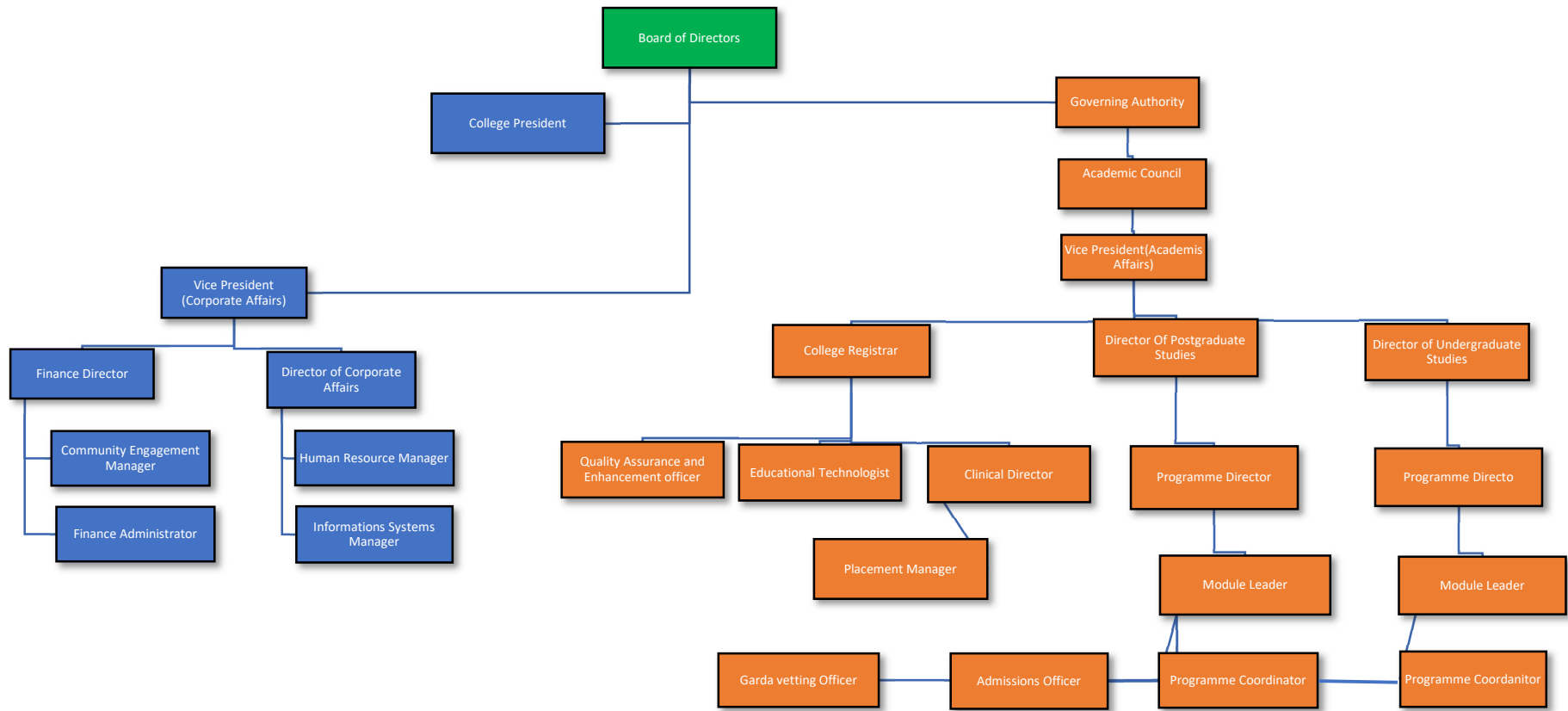
Figure 3 - ICHAS Governance Structure

Figure 4 - Key Personnel

Roles and Responsibilities of Corporate Staff

Title	President	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Director of Corporate Affairs	Head of Finance	Information Systems Manager
Accountabilities	Overall responsibility for the Academic Leadership and Governance of the College	Strategic Planning Operational Management Quality Assurance for Corporate activities.	External Relations Strategic Alliances Human Resources Marketing & Public Relations	Financial Planning Budgetary Control Allocation of Financial Resources	IT Strategic Development Information Systems & Platforms On-line Library Resources
Board & Committee Membership	Board of Directors Board of Management Governing Authority	Board of Management Governing Authority Quality & Standards Committee	Board of Management	Board of Management	Board of Management Quality & Standards Committee
Reports to	Governing Authority	President	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)

Performance Review	Chair of Governing Authority	President	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)

Figure 5 - Key Accountabilities of Academic staff

Roles and Responsibilities of Academic Staff

Title	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Registrar	Director of Studies	Educational technologist	Programme Director	QAE Officer
Accountabilities	Academic Strategy Programme Monitoring & Review New Programme Development Academic Leadership & Stewardship	Academic Standards Quality Assurance Implementation & Review Programme validation, monitoring and review	Responsibility for Teaching learning and Assessment Enhancement & Alignment of Academic Practices to Intl, National and College QA policies and Procedures.	E- Learning & Teaching Strategy Learning Management System Blended Learning Strategy	Dealing with Lecturers & Students on all programme matters including but not limited to reasonable accommodation, EMC applications, Admissions (including student induction), Transfer and progression, RPL, breaches of academic integrity and facilitating student engagement, monitoring class room environment, Fitness to Practice, Suspension of studies and withdrawal from studies Coordination and effective delivery and assessment planning Including but not limited to Assessment formation and Grading/marking criteria Programme Design, Development, review and validation.	Initiate and lead the QA policies and procedures of the college Ensure College QA conforms with best practice Intl and nationally Advise and support on QAE to all members of faculty and staff. Central role on internal and external views of implementation of QA and its effectiveness.

Board & Committee Membership						
					Manage Programme and participate in Internal moderation and Exam Boards Engagement with Quality Assurance system Human Resource Management – including induction of new teaching staff	
Board & Committee Membership	Board of Management Governing Authority Academic Council Board of Examiners Internal Moderation Committee	Board of Management Academic Council Programme Boards Quality & Standards Committee Board of Examiners Appeals Committee Internal Moderation Committee Disciplinary Committee	Programme Board Examination Board Academic Council	Board of Management Programme Boards Quality & Standards Committee	Programme Board Examination Board Internal Moderation Academic Council **Grade Review Committee** **Placement Review Committee** **Admissions Committee** **Appeals Committee (as appropriate)**	Academic Council Quality and Standards Committee Programme directors

Direct Reports	Academic Council & Governing Authority	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs) & Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs) & Registrar
Performance Review	President	College President /Director of Academic Affairs	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	President/ Vice President (Academic Affairs)		Vice President (Academic Affairs)

Figure 6 - Key Accountabilities of Corporate staff