

## **Academic Community Governance Document**

### **Purpose**

The STEP Academic Community provides a forum for both research and teaching academics as well as estate practitioners to:

1. engage in and disseminate between their respective communities, the results of relevant research, and practical experience, that
2. advances the field of knowledge and practice represented by STEP, for
3. the benefit of society and STEP members.

### **Terms of Reference**

1. Evolve a scholarly community that is focused on both teaching and learning as well as primary and applied research, in academic fields aligned to STEP, including
  - the law and practice of trusts, property and estates both before and after death; irrespective of the form of ownership of property concerned in the estate.
  - the law and practice of taxation,
  - the profession of accounting, and
  - the commercial fields of banking, finance, life risk, entrepreneurship and
  - the administration governance and succession to private wealth, irrespective of the form of its ownership
2. Provide a communications platform for that scholarly community to develop their knowledge and practice around existing and emerging areas in academic fields aligned to STEP and to promote their research and other activities
3. Contribute thought leadership to the education and public policy work of STEP Worldwide
4. Publish scholarly articles for journals under the auspices of STEP
5. Bring together practitioners and academics active in this broad-ranging community, not just STEP members

### **Aims**

- Foster research aligned to the Society's interests on a single disciplinary, multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary basis.
- Raise profile of the society within universities and institutes of higher learning
- Form collaborative research partnerships or working groups with universities, institutes of higher learning, practitioners or employers
- Bridge the theory and practice divide dialogue between academia and practitioners • Contribute to thought leadership disseminated through STEP
- Promote of teaching, learning and research within the academic fields aligned to STEP
- Support the realisation of the intellectual capital within the Society for its commercial and philanthropic purposes

### **Remit**

- Establish a programme of activities which further educate and promote technical understanding within research and practice areas.
- Develop the membership of the group geographically and by subject area relevant to STEP on an international basis (not necessarily restricted to the

membership of STEP but including the academic and professional fields to which STEP and its members are engaged);

- Develop a teaching approach and promote that approach within higher education providers aligned to STEP;
- Facilitate the alignment of teaching and learning between the academic focus of higher education providers and employers
- Extend academic focus on a multi jurisdiction basis
- Extend academic research focused on globally consistent issues
- Support and act as ambassadors for the work of Professional Development (including development of qualifications, EPP etc) and Membership Routes to the Society.
- Commercialise research output

## **Outputs**

- Annual conference
- Regional colloquiums or seminars
- Leverage network of potential collaborations, employers and institutional and industrial partners interested in STEP.
- Production of scholarly articles and papers related to the field of trusts and estates for publication and dissemination via the Society's communication channels etc
- Support the evolution of teaching and learning as it relates to estates practice in single discipline and multi discipline settings.
- Support the formation of university partnerships
- Lectures for STEP Events

The Academic Community will disseminate communication about the above matters between STEP members and the international academic community and the broader STEP network.

## **Membership**

Membership of the Academic Community is free to both members and non-members of STEP.

Membership is open to any practising academic or researcher working in any discipline which aligns with the interests of the society in a recognised institution of higher education which has degree awarding powers on either a full or part time basis.

Students who are pursuing a research degree may also participate in the community. Students studying on a taught course may not join the community irrespective of whether their degree has a dissertation or thesis element.

Membership is also open to practitioners who can demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and furthering research and intellectual capital in their area of expertise.

There is no fixed term of membership of the Academic Community. However, membership is subject to the continuation of each member's professional and academic standing in their own jurisdictions. Those interested in registering as members of the community should complete a registration form and supply an Academic CV for consideration by the Committee, unless they are already a member of STEP in which case they can request the Academic Community Secretary to add them to the member list.

## **Academic Community Committee**

### **Introduction**

The following sections outlines the arrangements for the running and governance of the Academic Community Committee.

The guidelines are not designed to be inflexible but deviations from should be raised to the Governance Manager of STEP Worldwide. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference.

### **STEP Academic Community Committee**

The Committee should consist of 6-12 members, all of whom should be members of the STEP Academic Community.

The Academic Community Committee will decide the strategic agenda of the Academic Community and its programme of activities globally.

Although the Academic Community is open to non-members of STEP, the Committee itself should comprise of active STEP Members in any membership category.

A Secretary to the Community shall be appointed from a staff member within the STEP Worldwide office from the Professional Development Team.

### **STEP Academic Community Committee Member – role specification**

#### **Mission**

It shall be the mission of each Academic Community Committee Member to be an active participant in setting the strategic direction of STEP's Academic Community and its programme of activities.

The duties of Academic Community Committee Members include:

1. To attend all Academic Community Committee meetings.
2. To participate in Academic Community activities in the Community's programme of output.
3. Provide ad hoc advice on specific issues relevant to their jurisdiction, region, research interest, skills and experience.
4. To serve on working parties, committees or any other body established by Committee.

#### **Induction**

Induction will be offered to each new Committee member, tailored to specific needs.

#### **Accountability**

To Academic Community members and Professional Development Committee.

#### **Term of office**

Up to three terms of up to three years each, followed by a stand down period of at least two years.

## **Expenses**

Academic Community members are entitled to expenses in accordance with the Expenses Policy.

## **Frequency of meetings**

The Academic Community Committee usually meets 4 times by telephone and video conferencing.

## **Application to the STEP Academic Community Committee**

Application to the Committee of the Academic Community is by letter of application to the Chair.

## **Specific Duties of STEP Academic Community Committee Officers**

**Chair:** The highest level officer of the Academic Community Committee. It is the chair's duty to preside over meetings of the group and to ensure that it conducts its business in an orderly fashion. Outside committee meetings, the chair's duties include acting as the head of the Academic Community, and as its representative to the membership of STEP and its principal spokesperson.

**Deputy Chair:** To assume the duties of chair in their absence and act as second highest officer and core committee member of the group.

**Secretary:** To assume administrative duties for the Academic Community to include but not exclusively, organisation of committee meetings, taking meeting notes, recording meeting attendance, management of membership records for the group, and event budgetary sign-off. This position will normally be held by a member of the Professional Development Team of STEP Worldwide but if so not with voting rights. The post of Secretary does not count towards the head count of the committee.

## **Optional Committee Roles**

**SIG Liaison Officer:** To be the central point of contact for promoting collaborative relationships between the SIGS and the Academic Community.

**Policy and Research Liaison Officer:** To be the central point of contact between the Academic Community and the STEP Worldwide Policy Team on any policy-related issues where there is merit to conducting research to influence the policy direction of STEP.

**Events Liaison Officer:** To be the central point of contact between the Professional Development Team and the Academic Community on the programme of Academic Community events, including its annual Symposium.

**Employer Liaison Officer:** To be the central point for encouraging practitioner members into the Academic Community. Engaging employers with the learning and development agenda of STEP and its qualifications (Employer Partnership Programme.)

**Accreditations Liaison Officer:** To be the central point of contact for engaging with institutions of higher learning for accreditations or recognition of qualifications for incorporation into the Qualifications and Membership Framework.

Other optional roles can be Syllabus Officer, Publications Officer, Teaching and Learning Officer.

### **Meeting Frequency and Attendance**

The Academic Community Committee must meet a minimum of four times in a calendar year, to coincide with the dates of Professional Development Committee. The Committee must meet with a quorum of 50% plus one. Due to the global dispersal of the group, attendance in person by the Committees officers is not necessary, but the Chair or Deputy Chair in their absence must be present at a meeting.

An individual's absence from three consecutive committee meetings, without notified leave of absence, shall lead to a review (led and communicated by the Chair) of his or her continuing membership. In the absence of a resolution and satisfactory assurances as to future attendance, the results of this review are to be reported to the Professional Development Committee with recommendation for that individual's removal, so as to be considered by the Professional Development Committee. Upon approval of such recommendation, the Professional Development Committee delegates powers to the Chair to inform the individual and wider Committee of their removal, and for the Academic Community Secretary to update the Committee website listing. It is at this point that replacement can be sought, in line with any other casual vacancy.

### **Reporting to Professional Development Committee**

On a bi-annual basis, the Academic Community Committee should submit a report on its activities to Professional Development Committee on major activity undertaken and planned for inclusion in the papers of the Professional Development Committee.

Members of the Academic Community may be co-opted into Professional Development Committee.

### **Authority and Oversight**

The Academic Community must refer any representation it wishes to make in STEP's name to the Professional Development Committee who will consider the Community's representations and will in turn refer the matter for Board approval (if appropriate) before the representation will be endorsed by STEP.

The Professional Development team will retain oversight of the administration, management and ongoing oversight of any partnerships, funding and sponsorship arrangements.

### **Arrangements for Working Groups**

In addition the Community will operate advisory working groups on an ad hoc basis representing research areas, activities and promotion of the community or regional advisory group promoting the community within their geographical location. These will report back to the committee.

The Community will be organised in order to enable community members, wherever based, to set up working groups. These can be arranged as per the preferences of the group's members (research interest, region, jurisdiction etc.) These may be formed at the direction of the Committee or on a self-service basis, however an active working group must notified to the Secretary and provide a brief report into the Committee in advance of a committee meeting or PDC report.

**Madeleine Jenness, Senior Manager Professional Development  
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