



**Flinders
University**

Academic Senate Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Academic Senate is a Standing Committee of the Flinders University Council and is the peak academic body responsible for academic governance on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 The Academic Senate provides oversight and assurance of the University's commitment to continue to provide high quality education and research training and undertake high quality research, including meeting the requirements of legislation and standards regarding matters of academic governance, academic quality and academic risk related to the provision of higher education, including the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) (HESF).

2. Academic Governance Framework

The Academic Senate will assure that academic governance at Flinders University aligns with the HESF requirements including that:

- 2.1 Processes and structures are established and responsibilities are assigned that collectively:
 - a. Achieve effective academic oversight of the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training;
 - b. Set and monitor institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes;
 - c. Establish and maintain academic leadership at an institutional level; and
 - d. Provide competent advice to the University Council and management on academic matters, including advice on academic outcomes, policies and practices.
- 2.2 Academic oversight assures the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training effectively, including by:
 - a. Developing, monitoring and reviewing academic policies and their effectiveness;
 - b. Confirming that delegations of academic authority are implemented;
 - c. Critically scrutinising, approving and accrediting courses of study and their associated qualifications;
 - d. Maintaining oversight of academic and research integrity, including monitoring of potential risks;
 - e. Monitoring and initiating action to improve performance against institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes;
 - f. Critically evaluating the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations;
 - g. Evaluating the effectiveness of institutional monitoring, review and improvement of academic activities; and
 - h. Monitoring and reporting to the University Council on the quality of teaching, learning research and research training.



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2.3 Students have opportunities to participate in academic governance.

3. Responsibilities

Within this Academic Governance Framework, the Academic Senate will:

- 3.1 Approve all policies and policy areas relating to academic governance, standards and operations including those reflected in Schedule A of the Flinders' Policy Framework;
- 3.2 Contribute to the development and review of the University's education strategy, the promotion of scholarship and the development of teaching and learning pedagogies;
- 3.3 Contribute to the development and review of the University's research strategy, and the promotion of an enhanced research performance;
- 3.4 Approve selected awards, prizes and scholarships and provide advice on other awards of recognition in accordance with relevant policy;
- 3.5 Approve the establishment and renewal of research and teaching centres and institutes, by reference to the performance expectations and criteria set out in the applicable policies and, where applicable, the outcomes of their periodic reviews;
- 3.6 Monitor and review through the regular reporting of its members, sub-committees and working groups:
 - a. the outcomes of and actions arising from Course, Centre and Institute reviews;
 - b. academic performance data in relation to the University's education strategy and the effectiveness of programs and initiatives in achieving academic objectives and improving the quality of teaching and learning and student support services;
 - c. research and research training performance, the performance of research and teaching centres and institutes, and the effectiveness of research strategy;
 - d. material risks and risk management plans in relation to the University's academic operations;
 - e. student appeals processes and outcomes in accordance with the *Student Review and Appeals Policy*;
 - f. the operation of the University's ethics committees; and
 - g. the outcomes of awards, prizes and scholarships under Senate's authority.
- 3.7 Provide advice on proposals for amendments to the University's academic organisational structure;
- 3.8 Provide advice on relevant academic management issues that impact on academic freedom, standards and integrity; and
- 3.9 Provide advice on any other matters relating to the academic activities of the University that may be referred to it from time to time.



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4. Delegated authorities

- 4.1 The Academic Senate may establish sub-committees or working parties to advise it on any matters within its terms of reference.
- 4.2 Except for any policy and policy areas delegated to Senate under the *Policy Framework*, Senate may delegate its powers and responsibilities to its sub-committees or any officer of the University.

Note: The current sub-committees are the:

Education Quality Committee
Learning and Teaching Innovation Committee
Research Quality Committee
University Higher Degrees by Research Committee.

5. Reporting to Council

- 5.1 The Academic Senate will report to the next available Council meeting regarding key items addressed.
- 5.2 The Academic Senate will report annually to Council on its own performance and provide assurance that it has discharged its delegated responsibilities under this Terms of Reference.

6. Composition and Membership

Appointed members (13)

Chairperson (a member of the academic staff appointed by the Vice-Chancellor)

Twelve senior academic staff members, namely, two (2) from each College, with skills and experience appropriate to the Academic Senate's terms of reference, appointed by each Vice-President and Executive Dean, giving due consideration to ensuring the membership is inclusive of diverse members of the Academic community.

Ex officio members (15)

President and Vice-Chancellor
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students)
Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)
Vice-President and Executive Deans of College (6)
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation)
Dean of Graduate Research
Student President
Education Officer, Student Council



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In attendance

Senior Governance Officer, Academic Senate

Additionally, the following positions provide specific expertise to the Academic Senate as needed and are encouraged to regularly attend:

University Secretary
Director, Library Services
Chief Information Officer
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Enhancement).
Postgraduate Students Officer, Student Council.

7. Term of office

Appointed staff positions: two years

8. Quorum

50% of membership (ignoring any fraction resulting from the division) plus 1

9. Frequency of meetings

The Academic Senate will be convened at least five times per year.