
Academic Senate

Terms of Reference

The University is committed to the achievement of quality outcomes, encompassing systematic monitoring, review and improvement of academic delivery, with a separation between academic and corporate governance in order to ensure academic quality and integrity.

1. The Academic Senate is responsible for

Assisting Council to oversee and monitor the academic activities of the University and ensuring the academic quality and integrity of the University's academic operations.

2. The Academic Senate will:

- 2.1 set and monitor compliance with the underpinning policies and processes necessary to assure and continually improve student performance and teaching and learning outcomes, and to maintain academic standards*, academic freedom and academic integrity;
- 2.2 set and monitor the maintenance of academic standards, consistent with external requirements such as professional accreditation, professional standards, and standards prescribed by Commonwealth and State Governments;
- 2.3 contribute to the development and review of the University's education strategy, the promotion of scholarship and the development of teaching and learning pedagogies;
- 2.4 contribute to the development and review of the University's research strategy, and the promotion of an enhanced research performance;
- 2.5 approve the accreditation of academic awards and changes to existing awards, including their suspension or withdrawal, and oversee course review and improvement;
- 2.6 approve selected awards of recognition and provide advice on other awards of recognition in accordance with Council policy;
- 2.7 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;
- 2.8 provide advice on proposals for amendments to the University's academic organisational structure;
- 2.9 provide advice on resourcing and other relevant academic management issues that impact on academic standards and integrity;
- 2.10 provide advice on any other matters relating to the academic activities of the University that may be referred to it from time to time.

3. In undertaking its role, the Academic Senate will monitor:

- (a) the outcomes of and actions arising from Course, Centre, Institute and College 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;
- (f) the operation of the University's ethics committees;
- (g) the creation of awards for academic excellence.

4. The Academic Senate may:

- 4.1 establish sub-committees or working parties to advise it on any matters within its terms of reference;
- 4.2 delegate its powers and responsibilities to any committee or officer of the University.

Note: The current sub-committees are:

- Education Quality Committee
- Research Quality Committee
- Student Appeals Committee
- University Higher Degrees by Research Committee

5. The Academic Senate will report to Council:

- 5.1 regularly, on decisions made in accordance with powers delegated to it by Council (refer terms of reference 2.1, 2.2, and 2.5-2.7); and
- 5.2 annually, in relation to significant matters within its terms of reference.

6. The Academic Senate will annually review and report to Council on its own performance.

7. Composition and membership

Appointed members (13)

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

Twelve (12) senior academic staff, 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 gender balance.

Ex officio members (14)

Vice-Chancellor

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students)

Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)

Six (6) x Vice-President and Executive Deans of College

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)

Dean of Graduate Research

Student President
Education Officer, Student Council

In attendance

Academic Senate Secretary

All members of the University community are welcome to attend meetings of the Academic Senate.

The following staff are not necessarily required to attend, but it is anticipated that they will attend regularly:

University Librarian
Postgraduate Students Officer, Student Council
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation)
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Life)
Chief Information Officer
University Secretary

8. Term of office

Appointed staff positions: 2 years

9. Quorum

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

10. Frequency of meetings

The Academic Senate will be convened at least five (5) times per year.

* Academic standards (from TEQSA glossary) means an agreed specification (such as a defined benchmark or indicator) that is used as a definition of a level of performance or achievement, rule, or guideline. Standards may apply to academic outcomes, such as student or graduate achievement of core discipline knowledge and core discipline skills (known as learning outcomes), or to academic processes such as student selection, teaching, research supervision, and assessment. At Flinders, reference to academic standards has been interpreted to encompass standards of teaching and learning (including research training), student support and research performance.

** Examples: course and student profile; student demand and achievement of recruitment targets; attrition; progression and completion; student evaluation of teaching and course experience; academic staff profile and qualifications; academic staff promotions; national and international benchmarking.