

Academic Governance Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) The purpose of this policy is to delineate roles and responsibilities with respect to the academic governance of the University.

Section 2 - Definitions

(2) For the purpose of this policy:

- a. By-law - means the [Western Sydney University By-law 2017](#).
- b. University Rule - means a Rule made under the [Western Sydney University Act 1997](#).

Section 3 - Policy Statement

Part A - Functions of the Academic Senate

(3) The Academic Senate (Senate) is the peak academic body in the University, and as a forum for academic debate, policy development and decision-making, is responsible to the Board of Trustees (Board) for:

- a. monitoring academic standards, values and quality assurance;
- b. advising on the development of and performance against academic plans;
- c. monitoring academic collaborations and partnerships;
- d. promoting and monitoring academic quality, standards and values of the University's academic activities;
- e. advising on the University's academic plans and academic risk management;
- f. advising the Board and Vice-Chancellor and President as appropriate;
- g. deciding academic policy and approving related procedures;
- h. accrediting and approving courses, programs and units;
- i. promoting the quality and development of research in the University.

(4) Subject to the By-law and University Rules, and to any decision of the Board of Trustees, the Senate will decide the University's policies and procedures on:

- a. the monitoring and review of the key parameters and performance indicators for academic planning and academic quality improvement processes;
- b. courses and units;
- c. University academic scholarships and prizes;
- d. University academic awards, including minimum standards and credit points for units;
- e. admission, enrolment, assessment and examination of students;
- f. student progress;

- g. student academic discipline;
- h. course and program structures, titles and component names.

(5) In approving an academic policy of the University, the Senate may authorise a committee of the Senate, or an office-holder of the Senate or the University, to approve procedures or guidelines for implementation of the policy across the University. These procedures or guidelines will be published in the University's central policy register, "[Policy DDS](#)."

(6) Subject to the By-law and to any decision of the Board, the Senate will, at the request of the Board or at the discretion of the Senate, advise the Board and the Vice-Chancellor and President on:

- a. the formulation and regular review of the University's academic plans and related academic development and evaluation strategies;
- b. reports on the University's academic activities, including those to outside agencies;
- c. issues relating to, and affecting, international academic collaboration and partnerships;
- d. issues relating to external regulatory frameworks of academic standards;
- e. establishment and disestablishment of academic organisational units, such as schools, research institutes and research centres;
- f. the University's academic profile;
- g. development, maintenance and enhancement of high standards in learning and teaching, research, and community and industry outreach;
- h. principles and guidelines for the conduct and enhancement of academic activities;
- i. improvement of the student learning environment and opportunities, including postgraduate supervision;
- j. development and review of standards for the appointment and promotion of academic staff;
- k. academic priorities and policies for consideration in University planning for academic activities;
- l. development of quality and standards in the links and affiliations with other academic institutions or other organisations; and
- m. development of codes of academic conduct for students and staff of the University.

Part B - Delegation for Approval to the Conferral of Academic Awards

(7) The Board approves the conferring of the academic awards for higher doctorate degrees of Doctor of Letters and Doctor of Science.

(8) Subject to any directions from the Board the following delegations are made with respect to approving the conferral of other academic awards of the University:

- a. The Senate approves the conferring of any academic award of the University;
- b. The Chair, Academic Senate, in exceptional circumstances, and where it is not practicable for the Senate to do so, approves the conferring of any academic award of the University;
- c. The Research Studies Committee approves the conferring of degrees for higher degree research programs, without the need for endorsement by the Research Committee;
- d. The Executive Committee of the Research Studies Committee, where it is not practicable for the Research Studies Committee to meet, approves the conferring of degrees for the higher degree research programs;
- e. The School Academic Committees approve the conferring of degrees, diplomas and certificates for undergraduate, honours, and postgraduate coursework programs; and
- f. The Executive Committee of a School Academic Committee, where it is not practicable for the School Academic Committee to meet, approves the conferring of degrees, diplomas and certificates for undergraduate, honours,

and postgraduate coursework programs.

(9) These delegations cannot be further delegated. Any exercise of the delegations under sub-clauses (8b), (8c) and (8d) must be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Senate. Any exercise of the delegation under sub-clause (8e) must be reported to the next appropriate meetings of the School Academic Committee and the Senate.

Part C - Academic Senate Committees

(10) The Senate may establish such standing and other committees to assist it in the carrying out of its functions. The Senate must oversee and coordinate advice from its standing committees by:

- a. receiving, considering and responding to regular reports from the standing committees on their objectives and activities, and the implementation of academic policy and the Academic Senate's decisions;
- b. referring to standing committees matters for their consideration and report;
- c. prescribing, where practicable, procedures for the standing committees' deliberations and reports; and
- d. facilitating, where appropriate, consultations among the standing committees.

(11) The terms of reference including the role, function and membership categories of the Standing Committees of the Senate and School Academic Committees are as approved and/or amended by the Senate from time to time.

(12) The Vice-Chancellor and President and the Chair, Academic Senate are, by virtue of office, members of all Senate committees.

Part D - Membership of the Academic Senate

(13) The Senate consists of:

- a. ex officio members (members who are appointed on the basis of the positions they hold);
- b. elected members (selected in an electoral process); and
- c. appointed members (appointed, as specified in the terms of reference of the committee).

(14) The Ex Officio Members of the Senate are:

- a. the Vice-Chancellor and President;
- b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Academic;
- c. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Research, Engagement, Development and International;
- d. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Engagement and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership;
- e. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning Transformations;
- f. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Digital Futures;
- g. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, International;
- h. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation;
- i. the Chief Student Experience Officer;
- j. the Dean of each School in the University;
- k. two Directors, or their nominees, of University Research Institute, elected by the Directors;
- l. the Dean, Western Sydney University The College;
- m. Director, Student Administration; and
- n. the University Librarian.

(15) The Elected Members of the Senate are:

- a. one person (the Chair, Academic Senate), elected by the members of the Senate from the members of the academic staff of the University;
- b. one person (the Deputy Chair, Academic Senate), elected by the members of the Senate from the members of the academic staff of the University;
- c. two members of the academic staff of each School of the University, elected by and from the academic staff of that School, one of whom is a level A, B or C academic staff member and the other is a level D or E academic staff member;
- d. one member of the academic staff of the University Research Institutes, elected by and from the members of the University Research Institutes;
- e. two undergraduate students, elected by and from the undergraduate students of the University; and
- f. two postgraduate students:
 - i. one elected by and from the postgraduate students of the University; and
 - ii. one elected by and from the higher degree by research students of the University.

(16) The appointed members of the Senate are three members, each of whom may be a student or a member of staff, whom the Vice-Chancellor and President may appoint, in consultation with the Chair, Academic Senate, for the purposes of achieving gender balance, consistent with the [Gender Equality Policy](#) and an informed perspective on matters under consideration.

Terms of Office

(17) Elected and appointed members of the Senate hold office for two years, and are eligible to re-nominate or be re-appointed as the case may be for three further consecutive terms.

Vacancies

(18) The position of an elected or appointed member of the Senate becomes vacant where the member:

- a. ceases to be qualified to hold the position to which they have been elected or appointed; or
- b. resigns by notice in writing to the Chair, Academic Senate; or
- c. is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Senate, without leave having been granted by the Senate; or
- d. in the case of an appointed member, is removed from office by the Vice-Chancellor and President.

Casual Vacancies

(19) If there is a casual vacancy in the office of an elected or appointed member the following provisions apply:

- a. In the case of an elected member another person is to be elected to fill that position except where there is less than 12 months of the term of office remaining in which case the Senate may appoint a qualified person to the position;
- b. In the case of an appointed member another person may be appointed to the position; and
- c. Where a person is elected or appointed to fill a casual vacancy they hold office for the remainder of the term of office of the original member.

Removal from Office of Chairs and Deputy Chairs

(20) By votes of two thirds of its membership in favour of motions of no confidence and recommendation to the Board, the Senate may initiate action by the Board for removal from office of a chair or deputy chair of the Senate, or of any committee of the Senate, where the chair or deputy chair has committed a serious breach of the terms of reference of the committee in question.

Qualifications for Candidates and Voters and Election Procedures

(21) The qualifications for candidacy and voting for the elected members of the Senate and its committees and for the election procedures to be followed are as provided for in the [Elections Policy](#) as approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President. The Senate may vary these provisions with respect to their application to the Senate and its committees where it considers that it is reasonable or necessary to do so.

(22) In the case of elections conducted for student positions on the Senate and its committees, where the position remains vacant after the conduct of the election, the Chair, Academic Senate or committee may call for expressions of interest from the relevant group of qualified students, and the Senate or committee may fill the vacancy on the basis of expressions of interest that have been received.

Part E - Academic Senate Meeting Procedures

Meetings of the Academic Senate

(23) The Senate must meet at least four times each year. At the discretion of the Chair, meetings may be conducted and members may participate with the aid of electronic communication technologies.

(24) The Chair presides at meetings of the Senate. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Chair presides.

(25) If the Chair and Deputy Chair are both absent from a meeting, the members of the Senate present must elect a Chair for that meeting.

(26) At any meeting of the Senate, a quorum is one half (or if one half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher than one half) of the total number of its members then in office.

(27) The Senate may make Standing Orders for the conduct of its meetings and those of its committees consistent with this Part.

Absence of Members from meetings of Senate and its Committees

(28) Elected members of the Senate may only nominate another person to stand in for them in their absence from meetings of the Senate, or of one of its working parties or sub committees, if that absence is the result of academic study leave, or sudden illness or misadventure. A nomination for that purpose must be made, in writing, to the Chair, Academic Senate, who will determine whether, and for which specified meetings, the nominee may attend the Senate, its working parties and sub committees as a member. If such a temporary replacement is approved by the Chair, the replacement may attend meetings specified by the Chair and exercise all rights and functions of the absent, substantive member.

Section 4 - Procedures

(29) Nil.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(30) Nil.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	19th December 2016
Review Date	19th August 2019
Approval Authority	Board of Trustees
Approval Date	16th December 2016
Expiry Date	9th August 2018
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