

# 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 purposes of this policy, definitions that apply can be found in the [Policy DDS Glossary](#), in addition to the following:

- a. HDR means Higher Degree Research;
- b. RC means Research Committee;
- c. RSC means Research Studies Committee;
- d. SAC means School Academic Committee.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

### Part A - Functions of the Academic Senate

(3) 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. approving academic policy and approving related procedures;
- h. accrediting and approving programs and subjects;
- i. promoting the quality and development of research in the University.

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

- a. monitoring and reviewing the key parameters and performance indicators for academic planning and academic quality improvement processes;
- b. programs and subjects;
- c. University academic scholarships and prizes;

- d. University academic awards, including minimum standards and credit points for subjects;
- e. admission, enrolment, assessment and examination of students;
- f. student progress;
- g. student academic conduct;
- h. program structures, titles and component names.

(5) In approving an academic policy of the University, Senate may authorise a committee of Senate, or an office-holder of 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, Senate will, at the request of the Board or at the discretion of Senate, advise the Board, and the Vice-Chancellor and President, on the:

- a. 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. 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 - Academic Senate Committees**

(7) Senate may establish such standing and other committees to assist it in the carrying out of its functions. 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 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.

(8) Terms of reference, including the role, function and membership categories of the standing committees of Senate and SACs, are as approved and/or amended by Senate from time to time.

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

## Part C - Delegation for Approval of the Conferral of Academic Awards

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

(11) 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, the:

- a. Senate approves the conferring of any academic award of the University;
- b. Chair, Academic Senate, in exceptional circumstances, and where it is not practicable for Senate to do so, approves the conferring of any academic award of the University;
- c. RSC approves the conferring of degrees for HDR programs, without the need for endorsement by the RC;
- d. Executive Committee of the RSC, where it is not practicable for the RSC to meet, approves the conferring of degrees for the HDR programs;
- e. SACs approve the conferring of degrees, diplomas and certificates for undergraduate, honours, and postgraduate coursework programs; and
- f. Executive Committee of a SAC, where it is not practicable for the SAC to meet, approves the conferring of degrees, diplomas and certificates for undergraduate, honours, and postgraduate coursework programs.

(12) These delegations cannot be further delegated. Any exercise of the delegations under sub-clauses (11b), (11c) and (11d) must be reported to the next appropriate meeting of Senate. Any exercise of the delegation under sub-clause (11e) must be reported to the next appropriate meetings of the SAC and Senate.

## Part D - Membership of Academic Senate

(13) 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 as defined in the [Elections Policy](#)); and
- c. appointed members (appointed, as specified in the terms of reference of the committee).

(14) The ex officio members of Senate are the:

- a. Vice-Chancellor and President;
- b. Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor;
- c. Provost;
- d. Deputy Vice-Chancellors;
- e. Pro Vice-Chancellors;
- f. Dean of each School;
- g. Director, Research Institute representing the University's Research Institutes, as nominated by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Research, Enterprise and Global;
- h. Chief Executive Officer, Western Sydney University - The College or nominee;
- i. Director, Data Integrity, Quality and Operations; and
- j. Executive Director, Library Services.

(15) The elected members of Senate are:

- a. one person (the Chair, Academic Senate), elected by the members of Senate from the members of the academic staff of the University;

- b. one person (the Deputy Chair, Academic Senate), elected by the members of Senate from the members of the academic staff of the University;
- c. two members of the academic staff of each School, 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's 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 coursework students of the University; and
  - ii. one elected by and from the HDR students of the University.
- g. one Indigenous Australian student elected by and from the Indigenous Australian students of the University;
- h. one international student elected by and from the international students of the University; and
- i. one student representing disability matters elected by and from the students who have identified as having a disability or chronic health condition.

(16) The appointed members of 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 diversity of membership, consistent with the [Gender Equity Policy](#) and the [Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy](#), and an informed perspective on matters under consideration.

## Terms of Office

(17) Elected and appointed members of Senate or its committees 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 Senate or its committees 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 Senate, without leave having been granted by Senate; or
- d. in the case of a student representative, has graduated from their program and/or ceases to be an enrolled student at the University; or
- e. 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, where possible, the casual vacancy will be filled by the person who, in the immediately preceding election, polled the next highest number of votes to the member to be replaced. If that person cannot fill that casual vacancy, the Chair of the Committee must:
  - i. appoint an eligible member as required to fill the vacancy; or
  - ii. request the Director, Governance Services to conduct another election;
- 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, Senate may initiate action by the Board for removal from office of a Chair or Deputy Chair of Senate, or of any committee of 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 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. Senate may vary these provisions with respect to their application to 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 Senate and its committees, where the position remains vacant after the conduct of the election, the Chair, Academic Senate or Committee Chair may call for expressions of interest from the relevant group of qualified students, and Senate or the committee may fill the vacancy on the basis of expressions of interest that have been received.

## **Part E - Academic Senate Meeting Procedures**

### **Meetings of Academic Senate**

(23) 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 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 Senate present must elect a Chair for that meeting.

(26) At any meeting of Senate or its committees, 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) 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 Senate may only nominate another person to stand in for them in their absence from meetings of Senate, or of one of its working parties or sub-committees, if that absence is the result of Academic Development Program (ADP) 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 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.

(29) Absent ex officio members may be represented by the acting incumbent of the position. The person representing the member in those limited circumstances may attend meetings of Senate. Those persons will have all the rights and functions of the absent substantive member.

## Status and Details

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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Program"** - A program of study consisting of at least four subjects or 40 credit points leading to an award of the University (Foundation Studies Program, Undergraduate Preparation Program, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Undergraduate Certificate, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Postgraduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma and Masters by Coursework Degree) which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the Board of Trustees.

**"Subject"** - The subject of study in a program in which a student enrolls.