

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 [University of Western Sydney By-law 2005](#)

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, advise on the University's academic plans and advise the Board and Vice-Chancellor as appropriate;
- e. deciding academic policy and approving related procedures;
- f. accrediting and approving courses, programs and units;
- g. promote the quality and development of research in the University.

(4) Subject to the [By-law](#) and to any decision of the Board, the Academic 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 Academic 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, the Academic Senate will, at the request of the Board or at the discretion of Senate, advise the Board and the Vice-Chancellor 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. establishment and disestablishment of academic organisational units, such as colleges, schools and research centres;
- e. the University's academic profile;
- f. development, maintenance and enhancement of high standards in learning and teaching, research, and community and industry outreach;
- g. principles and guidelines for the conduct and enhancement of academic activities;
- h. improvement of the student learning environment and opportunities, including postgraduate supervision;
- i. development and review of standards for the appointment and promotion of academic staff;
- j. academic priorities and policies for consideration in University planning for academic activities;
- k. development of quality and standards in the links and affiliations with other academic institutions or other organisations; and
- l. development of codes of academic conduct for students and staff of the University.

(7) The Academic 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 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.

Delegation for Approval to the Conferral of Academic Awards

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

(9) 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 Academic 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 Academic 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; and
- d. The College Education Assessment and Progression Committees and the College Education, Assessment and Progression Executive Committees may approve the conferring of degrees, diplomas and certificates for undergraduate, honours, and postgraduate coursework programs.

(10) These delegations cannot be further delegated. Any exercise of the delegations under sub-clauses (9b), (9c) and (9d) must be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Academic Senate.

Membership of the Academic Senate

(11) The Academic 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).

(12) The Ex Officio Members of the Academic Senate are:

- a. the Vice-Chancellor;
- b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and Enterprise;
- c. the Pro Vice-Chancellor University Engagement; the Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching; the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research; and the Pro Vice-Chancellor Quality;
- d. the Executive Deans of Colleges;
- e. the Associate Dean Academics and Associate Dean Researchs of the Colleges;
- f. the Dean Research Studies;
- g. the Dean of Indigenous Education;
- h. three Heads of School from each college of the University (not including UWSCollege), chosen by rotation, annually, according to Guidelines , which are administered by the Academic Secretariat;
- i. the Academic Registrar; and
- j. the University Librarian.

(13) The Elected Members of the Academic Senate are:

- a. one person (the Chair Academic Senate), elected by the members of the Academic 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 Academic Senate from the members of the academic staff of the University;
- c. two academic staff members for each college within the University, elected by and from the academic staff of that College, one of whom must be a male and one of whom must be a female, for the purposes of gender balance.
- d. one member of the academic staff of each school of the University (not including the Sydney Graduate School of Management), elected by the members of the School Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee of the School from the full-time members of the academic staff of the School, who is thereby appointed to be the Chair School Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee for the duration of his or her elected term of office;
- e. one member of the academic staff of the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education (BCIE), elected by the members of the Badanami Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee from the full-time members of the academic staff of the BCIE, who is thereby appointed to be the Chair Badanami Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee for the duration of his or her elected term of office;
- f. two undergraduate students, elected by and from the undergraduate students of the University; and
- g. two postgraduate students, one of whom must be a higher degree by research candidate, elected by and from the postgraduate students of the University.

(14) The appointed members of the Academic Senate are three members, each of whom may be a student or a

member of staff, whom the Vice-Chancellor may appoint, in consultation with the Chair Academic Senate, for the purposes of achieving gender balance, consistent with the [Women's Representation on Committees Policy](#) and an informed perspective on matters under consideration. The term of appointment is two years.

Terms of Office

(15) An elected member of the Academic Senate holds office for two years, and is eligible to re-nominate for one further, consecutive term.

(16) If, however, at the time of his or her election to the Academic Senate, an elected student member is in the final year of his or her course of study, that elected student member holds office for one year, and is not eligible to re-nominate for that category of membership for a further term.

(17) An appointed member of the Academic Senate holds office for two years.

Removal from Office of Chairs and Deputy Chairs

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

Senate and College Committees

(19) The terms of reference including the role, function and membership categories of the Standing Committees of Academic Senate and College and School Academic Committees are as detailed in the [Standing Committees of Academic Senate Policy](#). The Academic Senate may amend the terms of reference, roles, functions, and membership categories of these committees from time to time, but cannot delegate this authority.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part B - Elections for Academic Senate

Qualifications for Candidates and Voters

(20) The qualifications for election and voting for the elected members of the Academic Senate are the same as those set out in the By-law governing elections for the Board.

Procedure for Electing Staff Members

(21) The procedure for electing the academic staff members of the Academic Senate is the same as that set out in Part 5 of the By-law governing elections for the Board.

Procedure for Electing Student Members

(22) For the filling of elected student positions for the Academic Senate and its committees, the University may conduct joint elections with the relevant student organisation for the two undergraduate student members, and the two postgraduate student members, of the Academic Senate.

(23) The Board may make rules governing the procedure for conducting these elections.

Part C - Academic Senate Meeting Procedures

Meetings of the Academic Senate

(24) The Academic Senate must meet at least four times each year and those meetings must be conducted as face to face meetings. At the discretion of the Chair, additional meetings may be conducted with the aid of electronic or virtual communication technologies.

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

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

(27) At any meeting of the Academic 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.

(28) The Academic Senate may make Standing Orders consistent with this Part.

Absence of Members from meetings of Senate and its Committees

(29) Elected members of the Academic 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 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 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.

(30) If an ex officio member of the Academic Senate is temporarily replaced by a person acting in the member's substantive official position, the replacement may, subject to the Chair of Senate's receiving prior advice of the replacement, attend all Senate and Senate working party or sub committee meetings specified by the Chair Academic Senate. At those meetings, the replacement may exercise all rights and functions of the absent, substantive member, with the exception of chair or deputy chair responsibilities otherwise addressed in the approved terms of membership of the relevant body.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(31) Guidelines have been developed covering:

- a. Badanami Academic Governance;
- b. Standing Orders; and
- c. Method of choosing three Heads of School from each college of the University, by rotation, annually, to sit as members of the Academic Senate.
- d. [Implementation Guidelines and Support for Reviews of Academic Senate and its Committees - Appendix 1](#)
- e. [UWS Academic Governance Review Process - Appendix 2](#)

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	20th March 2009
Review Date	20th November 2010
Approval Authority	Board of Trustees
Approval Date	22nd October 2008
Expiry Date	22nd June 2009
Unit Head	Sophie Buck Director, Governance Services 45701415
Author	Greg Wheatley
Enquiries Contact	Sophie Buck Director, Governance Services 45701415