

# **UNSW College Academic Board Terms of Reference**

## **1. Role of Academic Board**

The UNSW College Academic Board (**Academic Board**) is the principal academic body accountable to the UNSW College Board of Directors (**Board of Directors**) for providing leadership in and oversight of academic standards across all UNSW College programs delivered in Australia, transnationally and across all modes of study.

Academic Board is a committee of the Board of Directors, and these Terms of Reference are approved by the Board of Directors.

Academic Board has the authority to:

- a) establish standing committees;
- b) approve terms of reference for each committee.

## **2. Responsibilities**

The primary responsibilities of Academic Board include:

- a) approving, monitoring and reviewing academic and student policies relating to academic quality, course development and review, student appeals and conduct;
- b) contributing to the College meeting the requirements of key Domains and Standards within the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF 2021) (see Appendix 1 for an outline of key domains), and the Foundation Program Standards 2021 (see Appendix 2 for an outline of key standards);
- c) approving new programs, program discontinuation and material changes to existing programs;
- d) approving and monitoring major curriculum reviews, including cyclical academic program reviews;
- e) approving and monitoring institutional learning and teaching standards and setting institutional benchmarks based on qualitative feedback and industry standards;
- f) approving award course completions and graduand lists;
- g) reviewing and endorsing student support initiatives, based on progress reports, policies and procedures supplied by relevant College departments and committees;
- h) providing advice to the Board of Directors on operational risk, quality of learning and teaching, resource planning, academic governance, new programs, student support and strategic academic initiatives across all campuses and modes of study; and
- i) any functions delegated to it by the Board of Directors in accordance with the Register of Delegations.

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### 3. Membership

#### Members

Academic Board membership comprises the following:

- a) an independent Chair appointed by the Board of Directors, with an academic leadership background in the higher education sector;
- b) an independent Deputy Chair appointed by the Board of Directors, who has a background in the higher education sector;
- c) an independent member with experience in the same or similar market segment (e.g. institute of higher education, pathways college, TAFE);
- d) UNSW College Chief Executive Officer (ex officio member);
- e) UNSW College Executive Director, Academic (ex officio member);
- f) a current UNSW College student elected by the UNSW College Student Representative Council;
- g) a former UNSW College student studying at UNSW, recommended by the UNSW College Director, Academic Programs; and
- h) representatives from UNSW Faculty of Engineering, Arts, Design and Architecture, Science, and the UNSW Business School, as nominated by the Deans of those Faculties.

Each member, including the Chair, has a vote. In the case of equality the Chair has the casting vote.

#### Approved invitees

In addition, the following are invited to Academic Board meetings to participate in discussions and will receive meeting agendas and minutes. These attendees do not have voting rights:

- a) UNSW College Executive Director, Students;
- b) UNSW College Executive Director, Future Students and Business Development;
- c) UNSW College Director, Academic Programs;
- d) UNSW College Director, Learning & Teaching; and
- e) a representative from the UNSW Academic Board, as nominated by the Chair of the UNSW Academic Board.

The Chair may invite other attendees as necessary.

### 4. Terms of Office

- a) Appointment of Independent members

Independent members of the Academic Board will be appointed for a term of three years. Subject to a written expression of interest, the Chair and Deputy-Chair may be reappointed by the Board of Directors for a second term, and the remaining independent member may be reappointed by the Chair of the Academic Board. These members have voting rights.



b) Appointment of ex-officio members

Ex officio members will be members of the Academic Board for so long as they hold the position relevant to their membership and are employed by UNSW College. These members have voting rights

c) Appointment of Student Representatives

Student representatives of the Academic Board will be appointed for a term of one year. Subject to a written expression of interest, they may be reappointed by Academic Board for a second term. These members have voting rights.

d) Appointment of UNSW Faculty Representatives

Representatives from UNSW Faculties will be nominated by the Deans of those faculties and appointed by UNSW College Academic Board for a term of three years. Subject to the nomination of the Deans of those faculties, they may be reappointed by the UNSW College Academic Board for a second term. These members have voting rights.

## 5. Casual vacancies of members

A member of the Academic Board is deemed to have vacated office if they:

a) being an independent member:

- i. resign office by letter addressed to the Chair of the Board of Directors;
- ii. are absent without leave of the Academic Board from 3 consecutive meetings of the Academic Board.

The Board of Directors will appoint a new independent member in case a vacancy occurs.

b) being an ex-officio member, cease to hold the office entitling them to be a member of the Academic Board;

The Board of Directors will appoint a temporary member in case of vacancy in the office of the Chief Executive Officer until a new Chief Executive Officer is appointed.

The Director, Academic Programs will be an ex-officio member of the Academic Board until a new Executive Director, Academic is appointed.

c) being a student member:

- i. resign office by letter addressed to the Chair of the Academic Board;
- ii. discontinue their enrolment or are excluded from the College;
- iii. are absent without leave of the Academic Board from 3 consecutive meetings of the Academic Board.

The Student Representative Council will elect their representative to Academic Board in case a vacancy occurs. Their appointment will be confirmed by the Academic Board.

In the case of the membership of the former student of UNSW College, the Director, Academic Programs will recommend their replacement in case a vacancy occurs. Their appointment will be confirmed by Academic Board.



- d) being a UNSW faculty representative:
  - i. resign office by letter addressed to the Chair of the Academic Board;
  - ii. are absent without leave of the Academic Board from 3 consecutive meetings of the Academic Board.

The Deans of UNSW Faculty of Engineering, Arts, Design, and Architecture, Science and Business will nominate a replacement in case a vacancy occurs. Their appointment will be confirmed by Academic Board.

## 6. Meetings

- a) Academic Board meets at least five times per year and meetings will be scheduled in alignment with the meetings of other UNSW College Committees and the Board of Directors meetings. Additional meetings may be called at the request of the Chair.
- b) The Chair will convene all meetings of Academic Board and the Deputy Chair will act as the Chair of a meeting should the Chair be absent from a meeting.
- c) A quorum for meetings of Academic Board will be 7 of the voting members present, including via teleconferencing.
- d) An ex officio member may nominate an alternate to attend a meeting in their place with the prior agreement of the Chair. The alternate must have been formally appointed to act in the ex officio member's role within the College.
- e) All meetings of the Academic Board must be convened by a notice from the Academic Board Secretary specifying the time, place and agenda of the meeting.
- f) A meeting held or a resolution passed at a meeting is not invalid because a person entitled to receive notice of the meeting did not receive it.
- g) The Academic Board may act notwithstanding that there may be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of any member or members of the Academic Board so long as quorum is present.
- h) All questions are decided by the majority of the members present and voting.

## 7. Resolution without a meeting

- a) The Academic Board may pass a resolution without a meeting being held if the majority of the voting members vote in favour of the motion and there are no dissenting votes.
- b) A voting member may vote in favour of such a motion by signing or providing written agreement.
- c) Separate copies of a document may be used for signing by voting members if the wording of the resolution is identical in each copy.
- d) A document bearing a facsimile of a signature is to be regarded as signed.
- e) A resolution passed without a meeting shall be ratified at the next meeting of the Academic Board.



## 8. Committees of Academic Board

The standing committees of Academic Board are:

- a) Program Development & Review Committee;
- b) Learning & Teaching Quality Committee;
- c) Assessment & Integrity Committee;
- d) Transnational Education (TNE) Quality Committee; and
- e) Appeals Committee.

## 9. Reporting

Academic Board reports formally to the Board of Directors and is expected to communicate to the UNSW College community more generally.

Reports are typically in the form of meeting minutes, written reports from the Chair and through verbal and written reports by ex officio attendees.

## 10. Effective Date and Review Period

These Terms of Reference take effect on and from the Effective Date noted below.

Academic Board will undertake a self-review every two years, including a review of these Terms of Reference and the outlined governance structures. This review will result in a report which may result in recommended changes for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors.

At least every seven years the Board of Directors will initiate an independent review of the effectiveness of academic governance processes.

|                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Category/Business Group       | Academic                        |
| Published Externally (Yes/No) | Yes                             |
| Approver                      | UNSW College Board of Directors |
| Effective Date                | 27 February 2025                |
| Last Updated                  | 27 February 2025                |
| Version                       | 5.0                             |

# Appendix 1

The Academic Board contributes to the College meeting the requirements of the Domains and Standards within the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 as in force from time to time, including the following:

- a. Domain 1 Student Participation and Attainment
  - Standard 1.1 – Admission
  - Standard 1.2 – Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning
  - Standard 1.3 – Orientation and Progression
  - Standard 1.4 – Learning Outcomes and Assessment
  - Standard 1.5 – Qualifications and Certification
- b. Domain 2 Learning Environment
  - Standard 2.1 – Facilities and Infrastructure
  - Standard 2.2 – Diversity and Equity
  - Standard 2.3 – Wellbeing and Safety
  - Standard 2.4 – Student Grievances and Complaints
- c. Domain 3 Teaching
  - Standard 3.1 – Course Design
  - Standard 3.2 – Staffing
  - Standard 3.3 – Learning Resources and Educational Support
- d. Domain 4 Research and Research Training
  - Standard 4.1 – Research
  - Standard 4.2 – Research Training
- e. Domain 5 Institutional Quality Assurance
  - Standard 5.1 – Course Approval and Accreditation
  - Standard 5.2 – Academic and Research Integrity
  - Standard 5.3 – Monitoring, Review and Improvement
  - Standard 5.4 – Delivery with Other Parties
- f. Domain 6 Governance and Accountability
  - Standard 6.3 – Academic Governance
- g. Domain 7 Representation, Information and Information Management
  - Standard 7.1 – Representation
  - Standard 7.2 – Information for Prospective and Current Students
  - Standard 7.3 – Information Management

## Appendix 2

The Academic Board contributes to the College meeting the requirements of the Standards of the Foundation Program Standards 2021. The Standards govern the following themes:

- Standard 1: Basic requirements
- Standard 2: Curriculum & pedagogy
- Standard 3: Admission
- Standard 4: Subjects
- Standard 5: English language subjects
- Standard 6: Pathways
- Standard 7: Assessment
- Standard 8: Teacher requirements
- Standard 9: Marketing of Foundation Programs
- Standard 10: Younger Students