Terms of Reference

Academic Board

Responsible officer	University Secretary	**Approval Date**	28 March 2024
Committee Services Officer	Governance Officer (Academic Board)	**Approval Authority**	Council

1.   Role

Academic Board is the peak academic body of the University, responsible to Council for assuring the quality of teaching, scholarship and research and plays a leading role in the academic governance of the University. Academic Board advises Council and the University Executive on any academic matter relevant to the University and works with them in achieving the strategic objectives of the University. In this role and through its functions, Academic Board addresses the requirements that arise from the University Act.

The *University of Southern Queensland Act 1998*, Part 4, Division 3, section 39, clause (3) states that the Academic Board must:

a.   advise the Council about teaching, scholarship and research matters concerning the University; and
b.   formulate proposals for the academic policies of the University; and
c.   monitor the academic activities of the University; and
d.   promote and encourage scholarship and research at the University.

The Board achieves many of its functions via its committees, which play a critical role in appraising the academic plans of the University. Academic Board and its committees also play a leading role in ensuring that the University is compliant with relevant Australian Higher Education regulations.

2.   Functions

The functions of the Academic Board shall be to:

1.   Set institutional standards for academic quality and outcomes and monitor the effectiveness of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning, programs and courses and the student experience, domestically, internationally and through Third Party arrangements.

2.   Make determinations on proposals for the accreditation of all academic programs of study offered by the University.

3.   Maintain oversight of academic and research integrity, including monitoring of potential and emerging risks.

4.   Review and provide advice on the development and effectiveness of policies, procedures and schedules that guide all academic and educational activities, including approval of Academic Quality policies.

5.   Monitor the quality of research, research training and research-related matters and associated policies and foster the development and maintenance of high standards and support for research and scholarship.

6. Monitor and review the effectiveness of delegations made under policies and procedures relevant to the role and functions of the Board and its standing committees, ensuring delegations are appropriately implemented.

7. Advise Council and/or the Vice-Chancellor on the academic aspects of the University's strategic plans, priorities and risk management, including evaluating the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations.

8. Evaluate annual self-reviews of Academic Board's standing committees to ensure that their referred responsibilities are effectively discharged.

9. Provide a forum to facilitate communication on issues within the higher education sector, and encourage discussion and dissemination of information within the University regarding good practices in scholarship and research.

10. Advise on matters referred to the Academic Board, within the remit of its delegated authorities, by Council, the Vice-Chancellor or other University officers.

3. Membership

3.1. Membership Structure

The membership of the Academic Board shall be:

1. Chair (Academic Board) (appointed by Council);

2. Vice-Chancellor (ex officio);

3. Provost (ex officio);

4. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) (ex officio);

5. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (ex officio);

6. Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Strategy) (ex officio);

7. Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) (ex officio);

8. Dean (Academic Transformation) (ex officio);

9. Associate Provost (ex officio);

10. Dean (Graduate Research School) (ex officio);

11. Dean (Learning and Teaching Futures) (ex officio);

12. Dean (Academic) (ex officio);

13. Four members of the professoriate, who do not qualify under categories 3.1.1 to 3.1.12, elected by and from the academic staff;

14. Two academic staff members from pathway organisational units, who do not qualify under categories 3.1.1 to 3.1.12, elected by and from the academic staff of the pathway organisational units;

15. Two academic staff members from the Academic Division excluding the Academic Affairs portfolio, who do not qualify under categories 3.1.1 to 3.1.12 and 3.1.14, elected by and from the academic staff of the Academic Division excluding the Academic Affairs portfolio;

16. Twelve academic staff members from the Academic Affairs portfolio, who do not qualify under categories 3.1.1 to 3.1.12, elected by and from the academic staff of the Academic Affairs portfolio;

17.   One academic staff member from the Research and Innovation Division, who does not qualify under categories 3.1.1 to 3.1.12 elected by and from the academic staff of the Research and Innovation Division;

18.   One First Nations academic staff member elected by and from the First Nations academic staff of the University;

19.   President of the Student Guild (ex officio);

20.   One undergraduate student elected by and from the students of the University;

21.   One postgraduate coursework student elected by and from the students of the University; and

22.   One higher degree research student elected by and from the students of the University.

The number of elected academic staff members shall comprise at least 50% of the total Board membership.

3.2.   Gender Representation

The University is inclusive of all genders and ideally the Board would comprise a balance of genders. The membership of the Board should not comprise more than 60% of any gender at any time.

Should the situation arise where any gender represents more than 60% of the membership, the person or persons of an under-represented gender next in line on the most recent Academic Board ballot shall be invited onto the Academic Board.

3.3.   Campus Representation

There shall be a representative of the elected staff members from each campus. Where this representation does not occur as a result of the election of members in the categories 3.1.13 to 3.1.18 an additional member will be elected by and from the academic staff of the unrepresented campus for the term of the Academic Board.

Where there are no nominations from an unrepresented campus, expressions of interest shall be sought from the academic staff of the unrepresented campus and the Academic Board Executive Committee shall act to invite an academic staff member from that campus onto the Academic Board.

3.4.   Elections

Elections for the Board shall be conducted in accordance with the Council Election Policy and Council Election Procedure. Election of student members will be conducted in accordance with the Students as Partners Framework.

3.5.   Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

Nominations for Chair shall be sought from the academic staff. Criteria will be provided stating requisite skills, capacity and experience. A Panel comprising:

- Vice-Chancellor;
- current Chair (Academic Board), or Deputy Chair (Academic Board) if the Chair is a nominee, or a nominee of the University Council where both the current Chair and Deputy Chair are nominees; and
- University Secretary

shall consider the nominations and compile a list of up to three nominations. The nominations will be presented to Academic Board for individual ratification by secret ballot, the results of which will remain confidential to the University Secretary only. The list of ratified candidates will be provided by the University Secretary to Council for consideration. Council will appoint the Chair (Academic Board). It is

expected that nominees for Chair will have prior Academic Board experience. The duty statement for Chair (Academic Board) is provided in Appendix 1.

The Deputy Chair shall be elected by and from the members of the Academic Board. Only elected members of the Academic Board are eligible candidates for the position of Deputy Chair.

It is expected that a member of Academic Board will have served on at least one Board Standing Committee prior to election as Deputy Chair. Duty statements for Chair, Deputy Chair and Board Standing Committee Chairs are available on the Academic Board website.

3.6. Terms of Office

Ex officio members remain members for their term of office. Elected members, with the exception of student members, shall serve for a three year term and shall be eligible for re-election, with no restriction on the number of renewable terms. Student members shall have one year terms running from 1 April to 31 March the following year, with an annual opportunity to continue their membership to a maximum term of three years without the need for an election. Student members shall be eligible for re-election after this period. The Chair shall serve for a three year term and shall be eligible for re-appointment for one further term through the standard nomination process. The Deputy Chair shall serve for a three year term and shall be eligible for re-election. The Chair and Deputy Chair may not serve for more than two consecutive terms in the same role.

3.7. Absences

1. Ex officio members of the Academic Board may nominate an acting person to represent them in their absence. The member should ensure the nominee is fully briefed and prepared to contribute to the meeting.

2. An elected member who is absent from two or more consecutive meetings without having been granted leave of absence by the Chair shall be deemed to have vacated the elected position, resulting in a casual vacancy.

3. An elected member who anticipates being absent with the approval of the University, from two or more consecutive meetings of the Academic Board, shall give prior written notice to the Chair for a leave of absence. During such absence, this place shall be filled by invitation to the candidate from the relevant membership category scoring the next highest number of votes at the most recent election. If no such candidate exists, then the Chair of the Board may invite a person from the relevant membership category to serve in this place.

3.8. Casual Vacancies

1. Where a casual vacancy for an elected staff member occurs in the first twelve months of the term of the Board the vacancy will be filled by the candidate from the relevant membership category with the next highest number of votes in the previous election. If no such candidate exists, the Secretary shall conduct an election to fill the vacancy.

2. Where a casual vacancy occurs more than twelve months into a term and with more than six months before completion, the Secretary shall conduct an election to fill the vacancy. If a casual vacancy is unable to be filled by election, the Chair may, after taking such advice as they see fit, appoint an appropriate person in the same category of membership to fill the vacancy.

3. Where a casual vacancy occurs in a term with less than six months before completion the Chair may, after taking such advice as they see fit, appoint an appropriate person in the same category of membership to fill the vacancy.

4. Where a casual vacancy occurs for the role of Chair or Deputy Chair, the process described in 3.5 will be reactivated.

3.9. Rights of Audience and Observers

1. The University Secretary, Principal Advisor (Academic Governance and Standards), Heads of School, Director (Library Services), Research Institute Directors, Deans and Associate Deans shall have rights of audience and debate, but not voting rights, at meetings of the Academic Board.

2. The Chair may permit observers to attend meetings of Academic Board. Observers have rights of audience only, that is, they may not contribute to debate and cannot vote.

3. The Chair may request those with rights of audience and/or observers to leave the meeting when confidential items are discussed.

3.10. Standing Committees and Sub-Committees

The Academic Board shall be assisted in its operation by the Executive Committee. Academic Board may establish standing committees as it sees fit. Each Standing Committee may co-opt members of the University to their membership for such terms as they may decide.

Academic Board may also establish sub-committees (independently resourced) under Academic Board or any of its Standing Committees, usually with a focus on specialised functions, to assist them to effectively carry out their functions. Sub-committees may co-opt members of the University to their membership for such terms as they may decide.

3.11. Ad hoc Working Parties

Academic Board and/or its standing committees may establish ad hoc and informal working parties to explore and make recommendations on specific questions or issues, as deemed appropriate. Working party Terms of Reference are approved by the relevant committee or sub-committee, with a copy provided to the next meeting of Academic Board.

4. Performance Evaluation

Academic Board shall undertake an annual self-evaluation of its performance. The summary report of the evaluation shall be submitted to Council.

5. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually by Academic Board, as part of the self-evaluation, to ensure they remain consistent with the Board's objectives and responsibilities. Any proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be referred to Council for approval.

Modification History

Date	Source	Details
		Previously USQ Calendar Management 3.2
26.03.2013	12/G/3	Conversion to new template
26.08.2013	Council	Revised Terms of Reference and Membership of Academic Board
21.10.2013	Council	Revised Terms of Reference of Academic Board
13.08.2014	Council	Update to Section 4.1, Number 6, to reflect new PVC title

17.02.2015	Academic Board Executive	Administrative updates following annual review
15.05.2015	Council	Revised Terms of Reference of Academic Board
22.07.2015	Responsible Officer	Administrative update to 4.1.9 following appointment and change of title from Executive Director to Director.
22.09.2015	Responsible Officer	Update to gender balance requirements within section 3.2, as approved by Academic Board on 22.09.2015.
07.12.2015	Council	Revised Terms of Reference of Academic Board (to include new section 4.8 Meetings, Reporting and Minutes)
09.02.2016	Responsible Officer	Removal of Fraser Coast representative from Membership list
15.03.2016	Responsible Officer	Removal of statement on Gender Representation in Section 3.2
11.09.2017	Council	Reinstated sentence regarding *ex officio* members in Section 4 (endorsed by Chancellor's Committee – 17.08.17)
11.12.2017	Council	Revised Terms of Reference of Academic Board. Functions to take immediate effect. Membership to take effect at the end of the current term i.e. up to but not including the meeting in July 2018.
12.03.2018	Council	Remove Section 3 – Meeting Procedures, now located in Academic Board Charter; add Appendix 1 – Chair (Academic Board) Duty Statement; remove Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor from membership; amended change of title for Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
10.04.2018	Council	Revised Terms of Reference of Academic Board (replaced 'Scholarly Information and Learning Services' with 'Education Portfolio'; amended term of office arrangements for Student Members)
25.02.2019	Council	Revised membership of Academic Board - Add Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Academic); Change title from Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Communities) to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Services); 3.4 Elections - Remove reference to USQ Statute 2010.
25.03.2019	Council	Revised Terms of Reference of Academic Board to provide Board with authority to approve Academic Quality policy and endorse Academic Quality procedures.
09.03.2020	Council	Revised Terms of Reference of Academic Board in response to 2019 Academic Board Self-assessment. Updates to Role, Functions, Membership, Rights of Audience and Observers, Standing Committees and Sub Committees.
15.03.2021	Council	Revised membership of Academic Board – addition of Dean (Academic Transformation) (ex officio)
11.05.2021	Responsible Officer	Editorial change to 3.4 Elections to align with Council Election Policy and Council Election Procedure.
18.10.2021	Council	Revised membership of Academic Board – addition of Pro Vice- Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research) (ex officio) and Dean (Graduate Research School) (ex officio) – removal of Director (Advancement of Learning and Teaching) and one academic staff member from Education Portfolio.

14.03.2022	Council	Revised membership of Academic Board due to changes in senior leadership positions. Removal of DVC (Academic), PVC (Students) and Executive Deans of Faculties. Addition of Provost, DVC (Academic Affairs), and Dean (Students).
08.05.2023	Council	Revised membership of Academic Board – addition of Dean (Learning and Teaching Futures) (ex officio) and Academic Registrar (ex officio) to membership.
08.06.2023	Responsible Officer	Administrative change to membership titles owing to the restructure of the Academic Division – removal of reference to Faculties.
09.10.2023	Council	Council approved to include PVC (International).
28.03.2024	Chancellor's Committee	Changes to membership to remove binary gender references, and editorial changes.
12.06.2024	Responsible Officer	Editorial update to ex officio role title: Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research) to (First Nations Strategy).
12.08.2024	Responsible Officer	Editorial update to replace Dean (Students) with Associate Provost from 12 August 24.
27.08.2024	Responsible Officer	Administrative change to 2.2 Functions: updated to reflect current procedure - removal of 'reaccreditation'.
23.09.2024	Responsible Officer	Editorial update to remove Academic Registrar from membership to reflect changes in senior leadership positions in Students Portfolio.

Duty Statement
Chair (Academic Board)

Division:	Vice-Chancellor
Department:	Governance
Classification:	Up to three-year appointment, to align with the term of the Academic Board
Location:	UniSQ Toowoomba
Approval:	Council – 12 March 2018
Responsible to:	Chancellor
Qualifications:	Normally, the Chair (Academic Board) will be a Professor or Associate Professor with prior significant experience on an Academic Board or similar.

Scope of the Role

The Chair (Academic Board) is responsible for leadership and management of Academic Board to ensure that Academic Board successfully fulfills its role and functions, as detailed in its Terms of Reference. The Chair (Academic Board) is a member of the University Council and Council's Chancellor's and Honorary Awards Committees. The Chair is also the Chair of Academic Board Executive Committee. A crucial role for the Chair (Academic Board) is communication within the University community on topics relevant to Academic Board.

Organisational Relationships

Internal:	
Reports to:	Chancellor
Member of:	Academic Board, Academic Board Executive Committee, UniSQ Council, the Chancellor's Committee, and the Honorary Awards Committee.
Key contacts:	Academic Board, Vice Chancellor and senior executive team, University Secretary, Governance Office professional staff
External:	Other Universities.

Key Responsibilities

1. Provide as Chair strategic leadership and management to enable Academic Board to successfully fulfil its role and functions as detailed in the Academic Board Terms of Reference.

2. Undertake the role of Chair (Academic Board Executive Committee), ensuring that Academic Board Executive Committee fulfils its functions and roles in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

3. Be an active member of the UniSQ Council and the relevant Committees, in particular reporting on significant matters considered or decided by Academic Board, putting forward the recommendations of Academic Board with respect to academic governance and consulting with Academic Board on matters when requested by Council.

4. Ensure appropriate communication within the University community on topics relevant to Academic Board.

5. Within the scope of the role, undertake special projects and other duties as requested by the Chancellor.

6. As a member of the University community, demonstrate the highest possible standards of professional and personal conduct, both as an individual and as part of a team, and commit to regular engagement in personal, professional and team development.

Is This the Role for You?

Within the context of the key responsibilities described above, it is expected that you will meet the following criteria:

Essential Criteria

- Demonstrated ability to operate at a senior governance level within an academic organisation including expertise in academic policy and performance oversight, proven capacity to set and achieve goals and work collaboratively with management to achieve outcomes, as well as the capacity to make and communicate to others critical decisions and actions.

- Demonstrated ability to make a leading contribution to consultative planning and decision making, and to engender a sense of unity, cooperation, and common purpose.

- Substantial experience in, and knowledge of academic governance including academic quality assurance, in a tertiary institution.

- Prior experience on the UniSQ Academic Board or at least a similar committee elsewhere is desirable.

- Alignment with the core University values of Respect, Integrity, and Excellence.

Workload Considerations

An amount equal to 50% of a Level B, Step 2 Academic Salary will be made available, each year, for research assistance and work relief, as agreed with the supervisor of the Chair's substantive position. This allocation is instead of any specified academic workload allocation. In addition, as a member of Council, professional development funds will be available in accordance with the Council Remuneration Policy and Council Remuneration Schedule.