



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NOTRE DAME**  
A U S T R A L I A

# Academic Council Charter

July 2022

Owner:	Board of Directors
Approved:	1 July 2022
Review:	July 2023

Fremantle

Broome

Sydney

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## 1 OBJECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY

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The University's Objects are defined in Section 5 of its Act of Parliament as:

- (a) the provision of university education, within a context of Catholic faith and values; and
- (b) the provision of an excellent standard of -
  - i. teaching, scholarship and research;
  - ii. training for the professions; and
  - iii. pastoral care for its students.

## 2 ESTABLISHMENT

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- 2.1 Academic Council has been established in accordance with Statute 33.1, which provides that the Board of Directors may establish such Standing Committees of the University as it thinks fit.

## 3 AUTHORITY

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- 3.1 Statute 34.1 provides that the Academic Council is the primary Academic Committee of the University and is a Standing Committee reporting to the Board of Directors through the Vice Chancellor.
- 3.2 The Academic Council's authority is limited to matters delegated to it by the Board of Directors or the Vice Chancellor.
- 3.3 In discharging its responsibilities, the Academic Council has the authority to:
  - 3.3.1 Approve the academic content and standard of courses and programs (both new and existing);
  - 3.3.2 Approve the assessment in courses and programs (both new and existing);
  - 3.3.3 Approve the criteria for graduation from degrees;
  - 3.3.4 Advise the Board of Directors and the Vice Chancellor on all academic matters, including standards and quality of the University's teaching and learning and research activities; and
  - 3.3.5 Appoint such committees or working groups as it thinks fit, chaired by a member of the Academic Council;
  - 3.3.6 by resolution, delegate any of its powers, authorities, duties and functions to any such committee established under section 3.3.5 or to any officer of the University, providing that no delegation will prevent the exercise or discharge by the Academic Council of any of its powers, authorities, duties or functions.

## 4 PURPOSE

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- 4.1 The purpose of the Academic Council is to assist the Board of Directors in the effective discharge of its responsibilities through effective oversight of academic risk, monitoring assurance processes and policy to uphold standards, quality and excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, research and research training, and providing competent advice to the Board of Directors on academic matters.
- 4.2 In addition to the duties and responsibilities listed at section 5, Academic Council will consider any matter referred to it by the Board or by the Vice Chancellor.

## 5 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Academic Council has been delegated the following duties and responsibilities by the Board of Directors.

### 5.1 Program Accreditation and Award Conferral

- 5.1.1 Accredit, re-accredit, approve significant amendments to, or discontinue the University's academic programs, including Vocational Education and Training programs.
- 5.1.2 Ensure program development and review activities align with the University's Strategic Plan.
- 5.1.3 Confer academic awards of the University, other than Honorary awards.

### 5.2 Academic Standards

- 5.2.1 Oversee and monitor effectiveness of quality assurance processes to uphold standards and practices across learning and teaching, training, scholarship and research activities in compliance with relevant regulatory requirements, and report on consistency of meeting these standards.
- 5.2.2 Foster innovation and excellence across academic activities, including by evaluating the effectiveness of proposals for new learning and teaching and research initiatives.
- 5.2.3 Monitor the academic activities of the University's faculties, including by
  - (a) receiving and evaluating reports on student grievances and appeals, and outcomes of student discipline matters and student feedback, and
  - (b) overseeing a formal and regular reviews of academic activities (including programs, professional accreditation, benchmarking and academic governance and management within schools and other organisational units offering teaching and research programs within the University).
- 5.2.4 Monitor and initiate action to improve performance against University benchmarks and targets for academic quality and outcomes.
- 5.2.5 Foster informed and open discussions on academic issues, particularly those relating to the *Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards)*.
- 5.2.6 Provide advice on appropriate academic professional development programs across the University.
- 5.2.7 Request and receive advice and reports from faculties relating to academic matters to enhance monitoring and review processes.

### 5.3 Academic Strategy and Risk

- 5.3.1 Provide advice on matters concerning academic strategic directions and practices.
- 5.3.2 Endorse and monitor reports on implementation of the Learning and Teaching and Research Plans, including (but not limited to) associated strategies relating to pedagogy, digital delivery, and internationalisation.
- 5.3.3 Monitor, scrutinise and advise on the University's overall profile of academic courses and programs; including new programs and innovations in learning and teaching and research.
- 5.3.4 Assess, monitor and report on risks to the academic activities and standards of the University, and effectiveness of strategies to mitigate identified risks. .
- 5.3.5 Contribute to the achievement of strategic plans approved by the Board of Directors

and to the Objects of the University.

- 5.3.6 Monitor effectiveness of processes to uphold academic integrity and oversee and advise on responses to mitigate risks.

#### **5.4 Academic Policy and Delegations**

- 5.4.1 Oversee development and review of effectiveness of policies and procedures, including those relating to teaching, learning, research, professional and pathways, including vocational education and training; student services and the student experience; and graduation of students.
- 5.4.2 Formulate and review effectiveness of regulations (including the General Regulations, Program Regulations, and Research Degree Regulations) and any other Regulations applying to admission, enrolment, credit, assessment, student misconduct, examination, termination, graduation or other regulations of an academic nature.
- 5.4.3 Monitor selection requirements for prizes, scholarships and other forms of academic recognition.
- 5.4.4 Review and confirm implementation of delegations of academic authority.

#### **5.5 Reporting and Oversight of Sub-Committees**

- 5.5.1 Provide timely and appropriate recommendations, advice and reports on matters within its duties, responsibilities and authority to the Board of Directors.
- 5.5.2 Report on relevant matters arising from debate and discussion on significant academic issues concerning the University and the wider academic community.
- 5.5.3 Undertake regular reviews of the Terms of Reference and performance of Academic Council sub-committees.

## **6 COMPOSITION**

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The Academic Council will comprise:

- 6.1** A Chair, appointed in accordance with section 7.2.
- 6.2** A Deputy Chair, elected in accordance with section 8.1.
- 6.3 Ex Officio Members**
  - 6.3.1 Vice Chancellor
  - 6.3.2 Deputy Vice Chancellors
  - 6.3.3 PVC, Research
  - 6.3.4 PVC, Student Experience
  - 6.3.5 Executive Deans of Faculties
  - 6.3.6 Directors, Research Institutes
  - 6.3.7 Academic Registrar

- 6.3.8 University Librarian
- 6.3.9 Director and CEO, Vocational Education and Training
- 6.3.10 Director, Pathways
- 6.3.11 National Director, Indigenous Strategy & Planning
- 6.3.12 Director, Regulatory Compliance, Governance and Policy.

#### **6.4 Elected Members**

- 6.4.1 two academic staff members at levels A-D from each Faculty, elected by academic staff members within the Faculty
- 6.4.2 two Professorial academic staff members at level E from each Faculty, elected by the Professoriate within the Faculty.

#### **6.5 Appointed Members**

- 6.5.1 Representative, Learning and Teaching Office, appointed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Learning and Teaching.
- 6.5.2 one undergraduate student and one postgraduate student representative as nominated jointly by the Presidents of the Student Associations
- 6.5.3 an external Professor or Associate Professor who holds (or has recently held) the position of Chair of an Academic Board/Senate, nominated by the Chair, Academic Council and appointed by the Vice Chancellor.
- 6.5.4 other staff members of the University as may be appointed by the Vice Chancellor.

#### **6.6 Invited Members**

Subject to approval of the Chair, other officers and staff of the University may attend a meeting of the Academic Council.

## **7 CHAIR**

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- 7.1 Only an academic staff member employed at a Professorial Level E will be eligible to serve as Chair of the Academic Council.
- 7.2 The Chair of the Academic Council shall be appointed by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the Vice Chancellor, subject to fulfilment of the following process:
  - 7.2.1 No less than 12 weeks prior to the expiry of the term of office or vacancy, all Professors (at level E) across the University will be invited by the Vice Chancellor to nominate to serve as Chair and be required to submit a written statement within a specified period as to their suitability for the office of Chair of Academic Council;
  - 7.2.2 Upon receipt of written statements, the Vice Chancellor will convene a Nominations Committee with composition at the Vice Chancellor's discretion;
  - 7.2.3 The Nominations Committee will make recommendation to the Vice Chancellor as to the suitability of nominees and may consult with members of Academic Council at its discretion;
  - 7.2.4 The Vice Chancellor will recommend to the Board of Directors an eligible Professor to serve as Chair.

- 7.3** The term of the Chair is three years.
- 7.4** The Chair is eligible for re-appointment, so long as no more than two consecutive terms have been served.

## **8 DEPUTY CHAIR**

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- 8.1** The Academic Council shall elect one of its academic staff members at the level of Professor or Associate Professor to be Deputy Chair for a term of two years.
- 8.2** The Deputy Chair is eligible for re-appointment, so long as no more than two consecutive terms have been served.
- 8.3** In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair at any meeting, the members of the Academic Council present must elect a member to chair the meeting. The election shall be conducted at the direction of the University Secretary (or nominee).

## **9 TERM OF OFFICE**

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- 9.1** Subject to Section 9.2, appointed members and elected members will serve for a period of two years.
- 9.2** The student members will serve for a term of one calendar year commencing 1 January of the applicable year. A replacement student nominated in this same manner will only serve out the remaining period in the applicable calendar year. A student may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of office.
- 9.3** Subject to Section 9.2, a maximum of three (3) two year terms may be served by a member who is not ex officio.
- 9.4** Casual vacancies shall be filled to the balance of the term of office.
- 9.5** The position of any elected or appointed member who has been absent for three consecutive meetings of the Academic Council without leave of the Council shall become vacant.

## **10 QUORUM**

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- 10.1** A quorum will be greater in number than one half of the members of the Academic Council at the time of the meeting and shall not include invited members.
- 10.2** With the exception of invited members, each member will have one vote and decisions shall be made on a majority basis. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall have a casting vote as well as a deliberate vote.
- 10.3** Should a member participate in meetings by use of audio or audio visual facilities, such a member shall be deemed to be present for the count of the quorum.
- 10.4** Invited members shall have the right to participate in discussions and debate at meetings, but shall not have voting rights.
- 10.5** Ex Officio members may appoint a delegate to attend one or more meetings on their behalf, subject to formally notifying the Secretary of the name of the delegate and the meeting/s for which the delegate is to represent them.

## **11 SECRETARIAT**

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- 11.1** The University Secretary (or nominee) shall be the Secretary to the Academic Council. There may be an Assistant or Minute Secretary to assist the Secretary and to take minutes.
- 11.2** The Secretary, in consultation with the Chair, will prepare and send notices of meetings, agendas, will accurately transcribe all decisions of the Committee and table all correspondence, reports and other information relevant to the Committee's activities and operations.

## **12 MEETINGS**

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- 12.1** The Academic Council shall meet as often as necessary in order to perform its functions, and at least four regular meetings shall be held in each University year.
- 12.2** The schedule of meetings will be agreed in advance.
- 12.3** Meetings shall be convened by either the Chair or the Secretary, and the Secretary shall send a notice of meeting in a reasonable timeframe to all members of the Academic Council.
- 12.4** The Academic Council shall determine its own agenda. Proposals for agenda items from Academic Council members should be submitted to the Secretary for consideration by the Chair for inclusion on the agenda. The Chair, in consultation with the Secretary, shall determine the agenda.
- 12.5** The Academic Council may appoint sub-committees and working parties as it sees fit to report to it on specific matters which are the responsibility of the Academic Council.

## **13 CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

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- 13.1** The Academic Council may make its own rules for the conduct of its business that are in keeping with this Charter.
- 13.2** Members are required to declare any interests, including any actual, perceived or potential for conflict with respect to participation on the Academic Council. The declaration must be made on appointment to the Academic Council and in relation to any matters listed in an agenda of the Academic Council at the commencement of each meeting.

## **14 REVIEW**

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- 14.1** This Charter will be reviewed annually by the Academic Council.
- 14.2** The Academic Council will undertake a self-review and assessment of its performance on an annual basis and provide a report on the outcomes to the Board of Directors through the Vice Chancellor. The purpose of the review and assessment is to identify ways and means by which it may become more effective in performing its role and to identify and implement any improvements to actions or processes.
- 14.3** Individual member contributions to the Academic Council will normally be reviewed annually, or at the discretion of the Chair.



## 15 REPORTING

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- 15.1** The Academic Council shall report to the Board of Directors through the Vice Chancellor.
- 15.2** The Academic Council will keep minutes of its meetings.
- 15.3** The minutes shall include:
- 15.3.1 advice, with recommendations as relevant in respect to the duties and responsibilities set out in Section 5;
  - 15.3.2 confirmation of action taken in respect of any matter for which delegated authority has been exercised; and
  - 15.3.3 advice on other matters referred to it by the Board of Directors or Vice Chancellor.
- 15.4** The Secretary shall circulate the minutes of the meetings of the Academic Council to all members of the Committee for comment and amendment before being signed by the Chair and circulated to the Board of Directors with the papers for the next meeting of the Board of Directors. The Academic Council's minutes and any recommendations are to be tabled at the Board of Directors meeting following the Academic Council meeting.
- 15.5** Each set of minutes will be accompanied by an Action Sheet listing action items, a nominated responsible person who will complete the action, and deadline for achievement. Responsible persons will report progress against their action item until that item is resolved to the Academic Council's satisfaction.
- 15.6** The Academic Council shall provide to the Board of Directors regular reports on matters within its duties, responsibilities and authority and an Annual Schedule of Business for the Academic Council.

## 16 CIRCULAR RESOLUTIONS/EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

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- 16.1** Where circumstances do not allow a matter relevant to the duties and responsibilities of the Academic Council to be put to a meeting of the Academic Council, and a resolution of the Academic Council is required, the Chair shall cause the matter to be considered by members by circular resolution.
- 16.2** Where it is not practicable for the matter in 14.1 above to be put to members by circular resolution, the Chair may act executively on the matter where delegated authority has been agreed.
- 16.3** Where it is necessary for the Chair to have a matter determined as per 16.1 or 16.2 above, the approval shall be reported by the Secretary to the next meeting of the Academic Council, and where appropriate to the Board of Directors.

## 17 DEFINITIONS

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For the purpose of this Statement, the following definitions apply:

**Statutes** means *Statutes of The University of Notre Dame Australia* as amended from time to time.

**University** means The University of Notre Dame Australia.

**Program** has the same meaning as the General Regulations

Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	15 April 2021	Board of Directors	New Charter

2	1 July 2022	Board of Directors	Amendments to composition (removal of Provost, Assoc Provost, PVCAD, addition of DVCLT, DVCIP & PVCR).
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## APPENDIX 1: SUB-COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

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The Statutes provide for the following Academic Council sub-committees

1. **Program and Course Accreditation** – responsible for matters that include reviewing and making recommendations on accreditation, amendment, and re-accreditation programs in relation to academic content and standards.
2. **Research** – responsible for matters that include monitoring and recommending policy and strategies relating to research and research supervision and making recommendations on research degree candidature.
3. **Learning and Teaching** – responsible for matters that include overseeing development of plans and strategies to progress learning and teaching excellence; making recommendations to foster and promote equality, assessment and improvement of learning and teaching practices, and leadership and professional development in teaching.
4. **Vocational Education and Training** – responsible for matters that include recommending proposals for new or amended VET programs; monitoring and reviewing the nature, content and standards of VET programs and reviewing compliance with relevant standards.
5. **Academic Standards and Policy** – responsible for matters that include providing advice and recommendations of the quality of, and current standards in, teaching, scholarship and research; identifying and monitoring emerging risks; and making recommendations about the effectiveness and adequacy of the academic policy framework and academic quality governance and management processes.