



# Academic Board Committees Induction Program 2024

Professor James Walker - Chair Academic Board

February 2024

# Today's Agenda

- Academic Board and its role in the governance structure of the University
- Academic Board and its role in ensuring compliance with the Higher Education Standards
- Academic Board Committees - overview
- Contributing to committee meetings and the work of Academic Board
- Questions

**Academic Board**

**and its place in the**

**Governance Structure**

**of La Trobe**



# La Trobe University Act

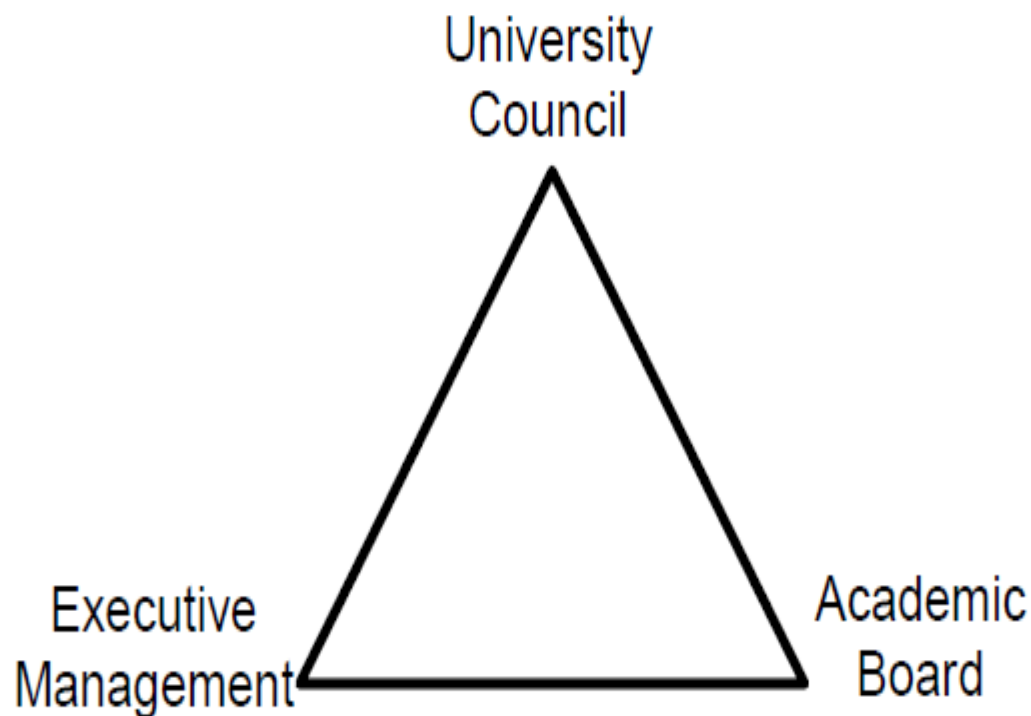
## Preamble

La Trobe's founding mission was, and remains, to serve the community of Victoria for the purposes of higher education, for the education, economic, social and cultural benefit of Victorians and for wider Australian and international communities.

From inception, La Trobe has been particularly focused on providing access to quality higher education to those from disadvantaged backgrounds and has become an internationally recognised leader in this field.

Innovation in teaching and research was, and remains, central to its mission.

# The tripartite governance model of Australian Universities (after Shattock, 2012)



# Governance – what is it?

- Governance (to steer) is the establishment and oversight of decision-making frameworks (the ‘what’).
- Management (to handle) is the process or activity involved in implementing those frameworks and rules (the ‘how’).

# Role of Council

- Appoint Vice-Chancellor and monitor performance
- Approve strategy and budget
- Establish policy and monitor risk
- Monitor academic activity
- Approve commercial activities
- Delegates to Academic Board responsibility for academic matters
- Receive reports from Academic Board

# Academic Board

- Responsible for Academic Governance
  - Principal policy-making and advisory body on all academic matters
  - Assuring academic standards and quality
- In partnership with but independent of the VC and senior management
- Accountable to the Council – a sub-committee of Council
- Origins in tradition of a university as a community of scholars
  - Consultation, collegiality and broad-based representation.
- Members are Academics, Students & Professional Staff



# Role of Academic Board

- Academic Board is responsible for approving and monitoring the implementation of policy on academic matters including:
  - admission to degrees, diplomas and other awards;
  - new and revised programs;
  - teaching and learning;
  - assessment;
  - student conduct;
  - Research and research training;
  - reviews of courses;
  - academic staff promotions and senior (Levels D & E) academic appointments; and
  - prizes and scholarships.

*At its heart the role of the Board is to ensure that La Trobe as a self-accrediting institution is capable of ensuring the quality of the qualifications that it issues; the Board is the cornerstone of the quality assurance process of our University*

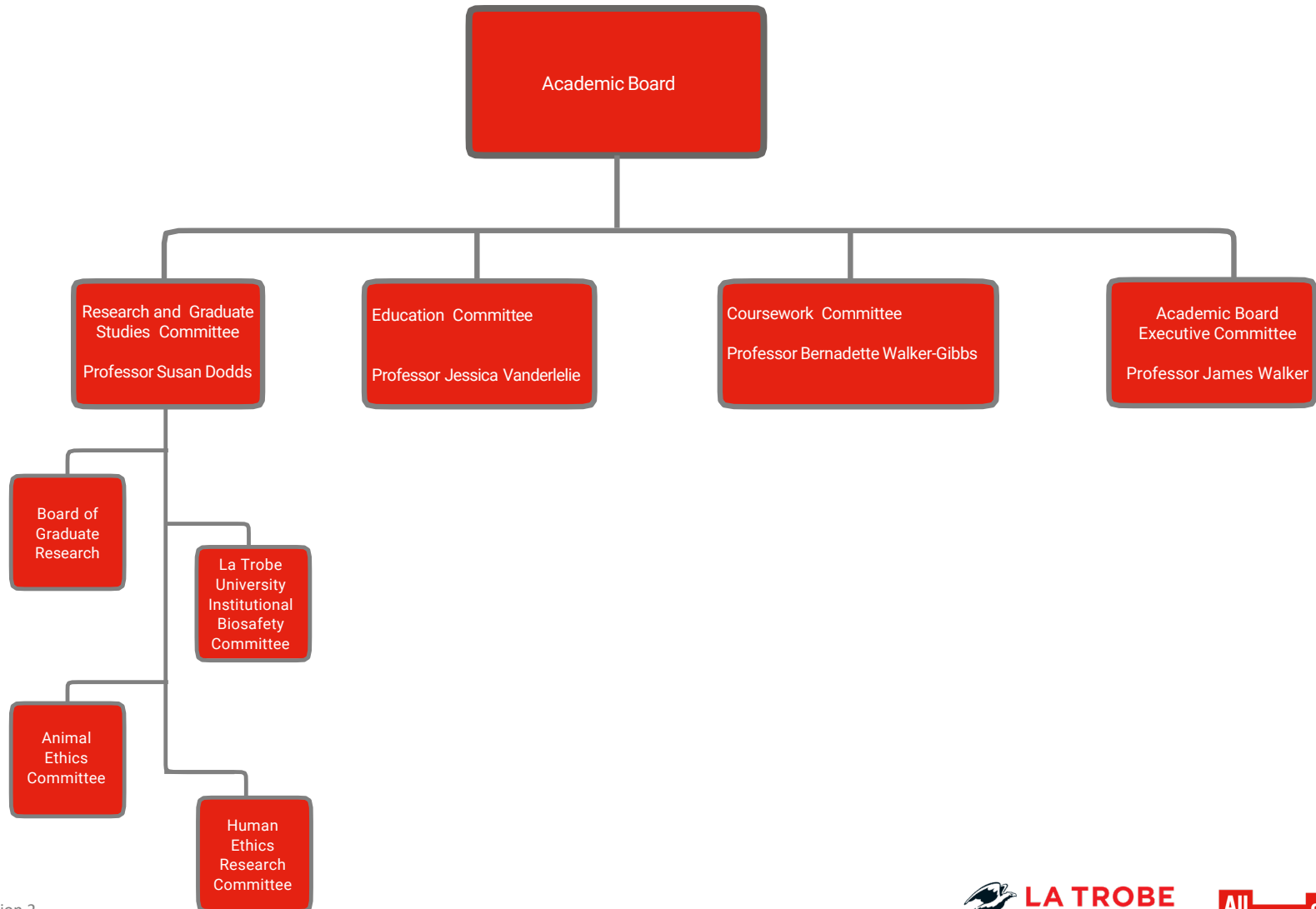
# Role of Academic Board

- Academic Board monitors institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes.
- Academic Board provides academic oversight to assure the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training.
- Academic Board monitors the management of academic risks
- Academic Board considers and advises the Vice-Chancellor and the University Council on academic matters and any other broad issues which affect the academic excellence of the University.
- Academic Board provides a forum to facilitate information flow and debate within the University.

# Academic Board Committees

1. Assist Academic Board in meeting:
  - Terms of Reference
  - Responsibilities under the Higher Education Standards
  
2. Provide:
  - Forum for robust consideration of new and revised policies
  - Expertise in research, and learning and teaching matters
  - Critical scrutiny of proposals for new and revised courses

# Academic Board



# Academic Board Committees

## • Coursework Committee

- considers proposals for new or substantially changed courses, new instances of existing courses, and closure or suspension of courses;
- makes recommendations to Academic Board regarding approvals of new courses;
- approves course closure proposals and most course revision proposals
- considers reports of academic course reviews, including monitoring progress on key recommendations

# Academic Board Committees

- **Education Committee**

- provides advice to Academic Board on curriculum, teaching and learning, credit and admissions policies, quality and performance, including student lifecycle data, and quality improvement initiatives and their impact;
- provides advice to Academic Board on strategic direction and priorities and the University's Teaching and Learning Plan.

# Academic Board Committees

- **Research and Graduate Studies**

- considers and advises Academic Board on matters relating to policies and strategic directions for research and research training;
- monitors policy compliance, ethical conduct, quality and standards of research and research training;
- monitors the (dis)establishment and renewal of Research Centres and Institutes and the development and implementation of the University's Research Strategy.

# Academic Board Committees

- **Academic Board Executive Committee**
  - Meets as needed, usually between Academic Board meetings
  - Co-ordinates the work of Academic Board committees
  - Considers out of session requests for approvals.

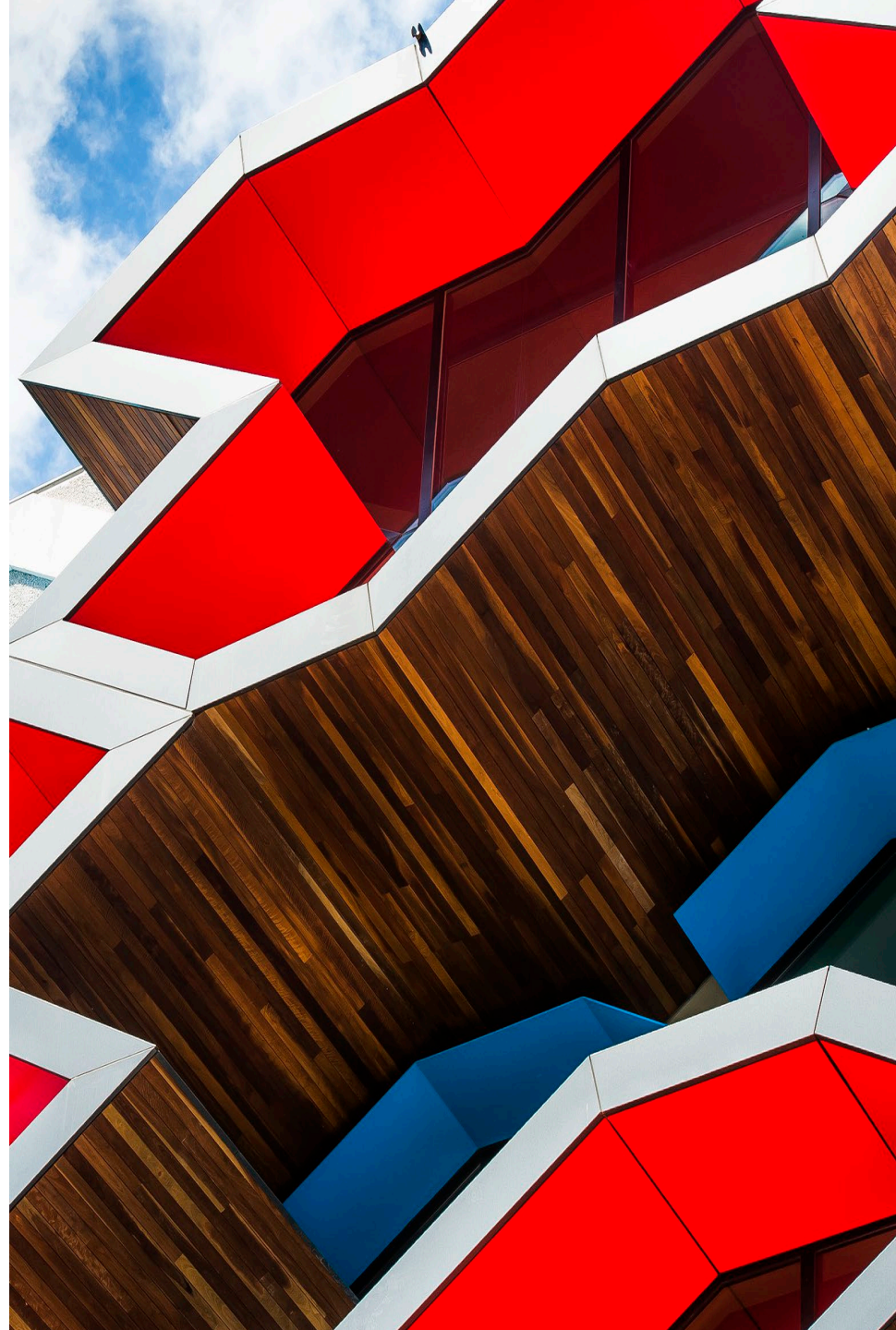


**Academic Board**

**and Regulatory**

**Monitoring of**

**Standards**



# Governing Legislation and regulatory frameworks

- **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2021 (TEQSA)** Peak government body and legislative instrument regulating and assuring the quality of higher education in Australia, including the application of the *AQF* and *ESOS*
- **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)** in particular, relating to academic governance; corporate governance; academic leadership; scholarship; and academic quality assurance.
- **The Australian Qualifications Framework 2011 (AQF)** Sets out the qualification levels and nomenclature - defines their characteristics including broad learning outcomes, volume, approaches.
- **Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS) and Code of Practice 2018** Governing delivery of education to onshore international students, including ELICOS. 11 detailed standards on provision of educational services.
- **Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)** Governing higher education reporting to government for funding

# Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency

- **TEQSA** is an independent statutory authority established in 2011 after the Bradley Review
  - Sits within the portfolio of Australian Government Dept of Education, Skills and Employment
  - Registration and regulation of all providers; accreditation of courses for non-self-accrediting non-university providers. Universities self-accredit their courses.
  - Has substantial powers including setting conditions on registration, 'cease and desist' powers, and deregistration, 'detect and monitor'.
  - Decisions are public.
  - La Trobe re-registration is scheduled for 2025 and preparation commenced in 2020 – it will address every standard with evidence and controls.
  - Will look at the functions of academic governance and the board and its sub committees, against the Threshold Standards.
  - **Office of Quality and Standards** facilitates compliance in academic governance and educational standards.

# Threshold Standards

The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) is a set of standards that all providers must meet to enter and remain within Australia's higher education system.

*7 Domains, 24 Sections, 103 Statements*

- 1. Student participation and attainment** - admissions, credit, transition and academic support mechanisms, learning outcomes, assessment, qualification issuance
- 2. Learning environment** – the nature, access to and fitness for purpose of the learning environment, diversity, equity and wellbeing, mechanisms for dealing with grievances
- 3. Teaching** – course design and outcomes (including AQF adherence), quality of staffing and learning resources
- 4. Research and research training** – governance and management of research and research training, including research integrity and environment
- 5. Institutional quality assurance** – course approvals and QA, policy framework and academic integrity, monitoring and improvement; compliance with the HESF
- 6. Governance and accountability** – the effectiveness of overarching academic and corporate governance
- 7. Representation, information and information management** – well-managed, accurate, ethical, complete and appropriate information provision to students

Introductory module - <https://latrobe.litmos.com.au/home/dashboard>

# HESF: key concepts and intent

- **Students - front and centre**, including consideration of sub-groups, approaches to support and integrity of our approach.
- **All** providers, **all** of the standards, **all** of the time. Breaches are reportable and must be resolved or in progress within 14 days.
- **Transparency and consistency** of processes – ‘evidence’ and ‘controls’ against each standard
- **Detect and correct mechanisms**
  - How do we detect regularly?
  - How do we resolve problems?
  - How do we close the loop?
  - How do we keep ourselves to account for quality?

***Academic Board plays a significant role in monitoring and assuring these questions can be answered***

# TEQSA's core questions on standards of academic governance for Academic Boards

1. Do members of the academic governing body attend meetings regularly and actively participate in academic governance processes or discussions?
2. Is there scope for the academic governing body to delegate tasks to permanent and/or project-specific sub-committees?
3. Are records of discussion kept reflecting approval of policies and principles and the monitoring of academic processes?
4. Is there evidence of academic quality assurance activity?
5. Is there evidence of consistent reporting to the academic board, that academic activity is being monitored over time, that data is being used and outputs analysed?
6. Is there evidence of the implementation of new processes or changes being made to curricula in response to course review, analysis and conclusions?
7. Does the corporate governing body receive, consider and respond to reports from the academic governing body?
8. Is there evidence of strong oversight and a connection between the academic board and other academic frameworks and operations of the provider?

# Contributing to Academic Board Committee meetings and the work of Academic Board



# Being involved in Committee meetings

- Formal informality – papers and agenda
- Format of meetings – varies for each committee – all have a MS Teams link,
- Rare need for formal voting
- **Everyone** is encouraged to speak, **introduce themselves** and be treated respectfully
- Reports from major portfolio holders – to monitor quality and areas of academic risk



# Getting and Staying Prepared for Committee meetings

- Introductory module for HESF - <https://latrobe.litmos.com.au/home/dashboard>
- Policy Library – develop a facility for navigating the resource through search, and the Bulletin Board.
- Leave yourself time to read papers – block out time.
- Seek further information via the Executive Officer if required.

# FAQs

- How do I ask a question in the meeting?
- Will there be debate and discussion?
- Can I raise a matter in the meeting?
- Can I ask for matters to be put on the agenda for upcoming meetings?
- What if I can't make it to a meeting?

# Academic Board Committees Contact

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**Thank you**

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