Academic Board Induction Program 2025

Professor Carol McKinstry - Chair Academic Board

February 2025

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

- Contributing to Academic Board meetings and the work of Academic Board

- Contemporary issues facing Academic Boards

- Questions

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Academic Board and its place in the Governance Structure of La Trobe
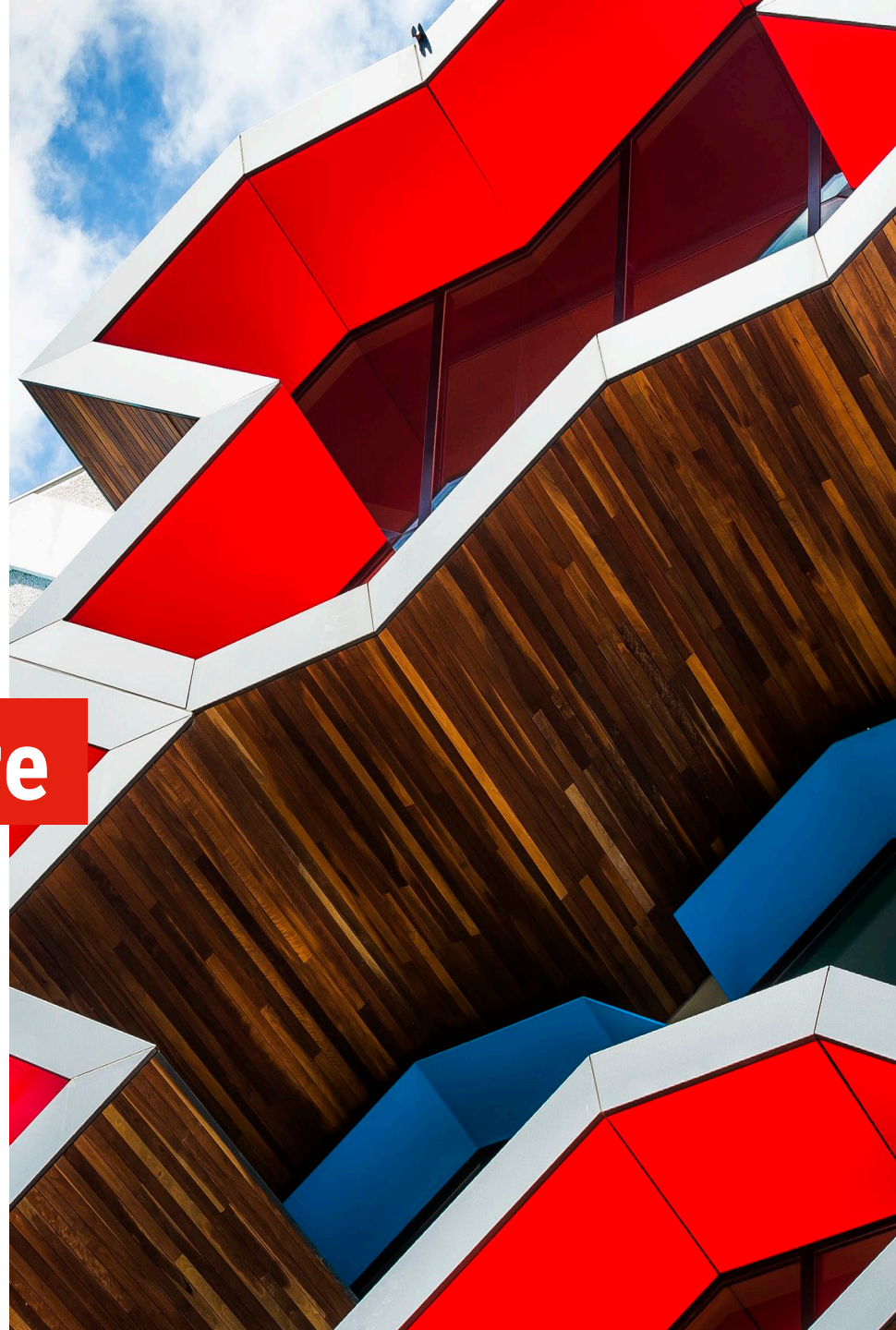
La Trobe University Act

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.

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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

- Receives reports from Academic Board at each meeting

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Academic Board

- Works with others in furthering the mission of the University.

- 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 –model of consultation, collegiality and broad-based representation.

- Members are Academics, Students & Professional Staff

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

University Council

Executive Management

Academic Board

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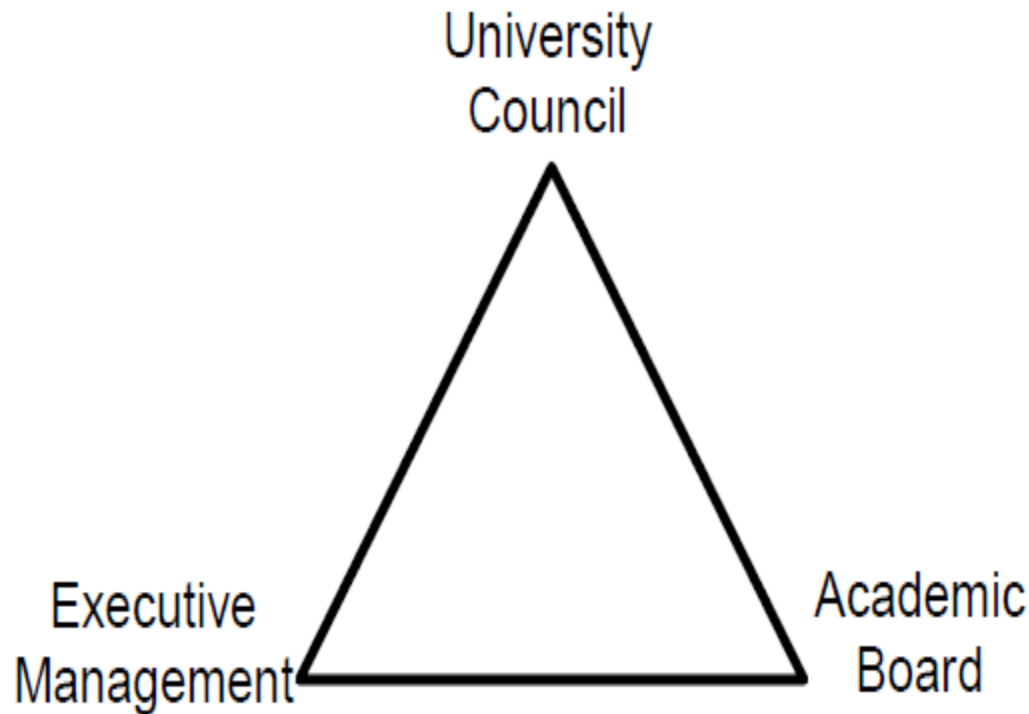
Governance – what is it?

- 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').

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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 courses;
  – 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.

  <u>In light of the above, the volume of papers for each meeting can be substantial.</u>

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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.

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Breadth of Academic Policies

Research and Research Training

- Intellectual Property

- Research Conduct

- Research Management

- Research Training

- Research Centres

Teaching and Learning

- Course structure and development

- Assessment

- Quality assurance

- Student engagement, recruitment and retention

- Equity - Wellbeing

- Academic integrity

- International & Third Party delivery

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Academic Board Committees

Academic Board Committees scrutinise proposals and policies and provide advice to the Board on the outcomes of their discussions.

- **Research and Graduate Studies**
  - Promotion of research and research training, and the consideration of research priorities.

- **Education**
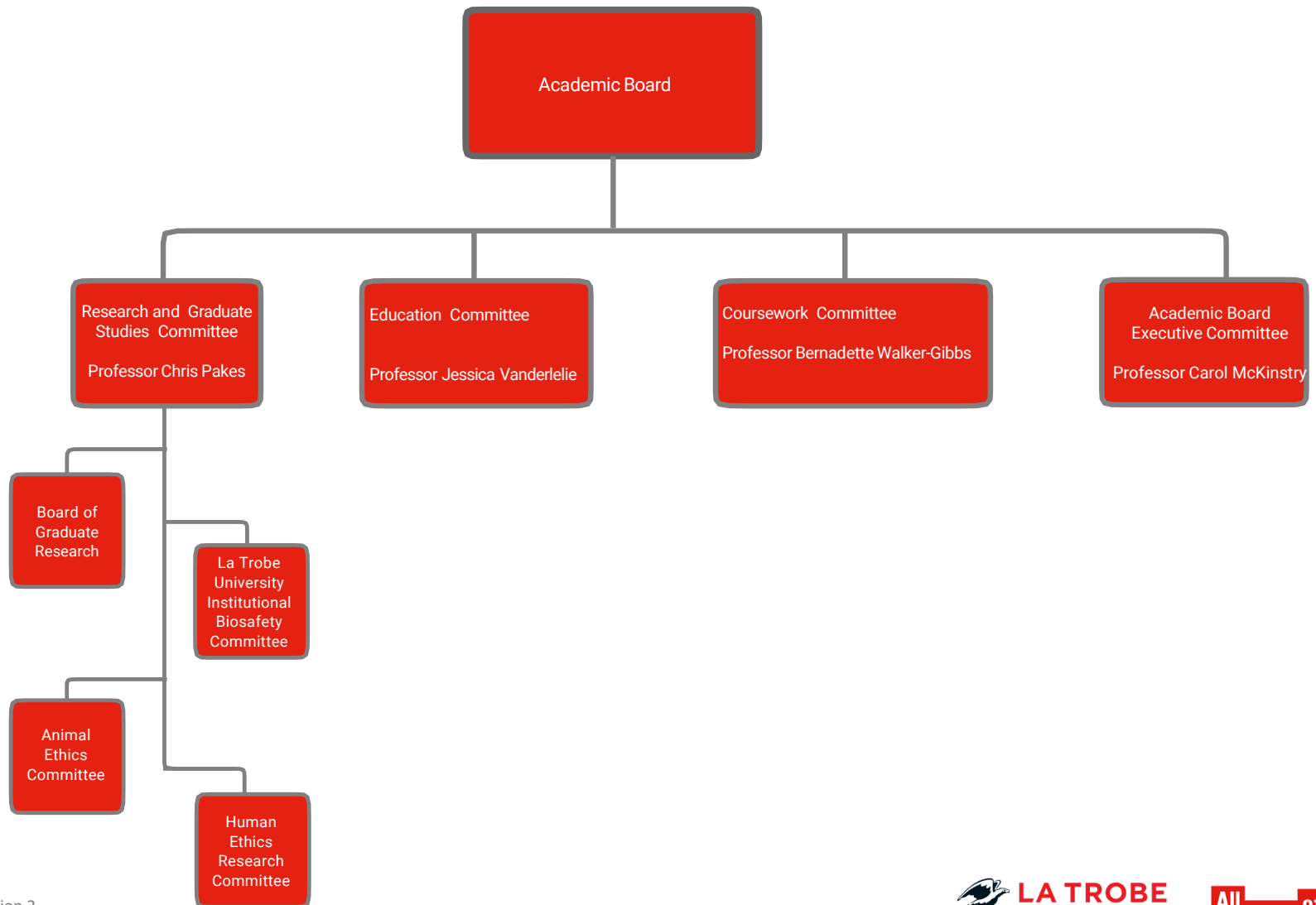 - Improve and monitor quality of curriculum, teaching, and learning processes and outcomes.

- **Coursework**
  - Considers proposals for new or substantially changed courses, and closure of courses and reports of academic course reviews.

- **Academic Board Executive Committee**
  - Co-ordinates the work of Academic Board committees and considers out of session requests for approvals.

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Academic Board

Academic Board

Research and Graduate Studies Committee

Professor Chris Pakes

Education Committee

Professor Jessica Vanderlelie

Coursework Committee

Professor Bernadette Walker-Gibbs

Academic Board Executive Committee

Professor Carol McKinstry

Board of Graduate Research

La Trobe University Institutional Biosafety Committee

Animal Ethics Committee

Human Ethics Research Committee

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Academic Board Membership

Ex officio

Senior Academic Leaders

VC, DVCs , PVCs (Grad & Global Research and Indigenous),

Provost, Heads of Campus, Deans

Elected Chair and Deputy Chair

Chairs/Deputy Chairs of AB Policy Committees

The President of the LTSU and the LTSA Council Presidents

Elected staff

15 x Level A/B academic staff

15 x Level C/D academic staff

20 x Level E academic staff

5 x Level 1-8 professional staff

5 x Level 9 or above professional staff
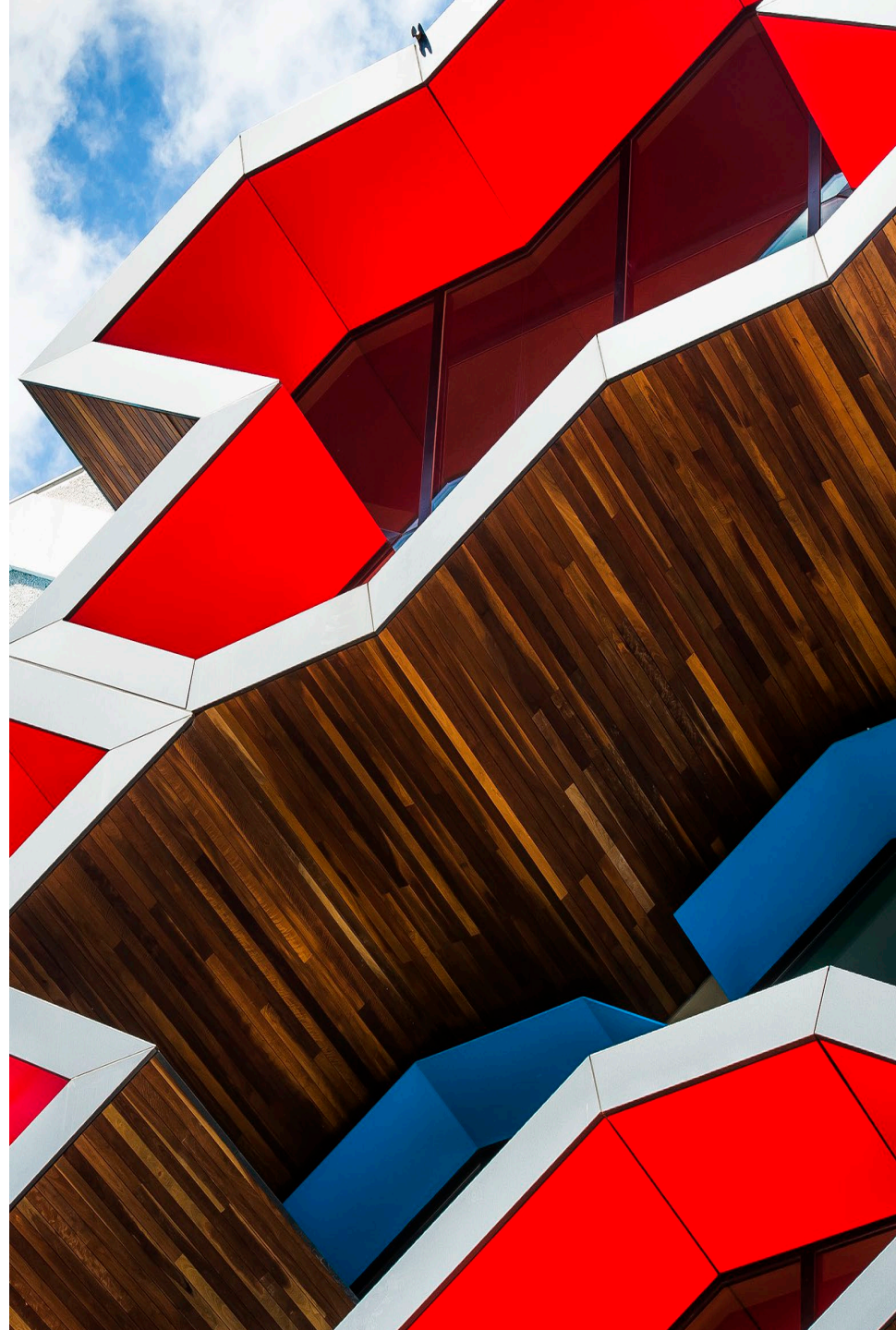
Students

2 elected postgraduate

3 elected undergraduate

1 elected HDR candidate

1 appointed Indigenous student

1 appointed Indigenous HDR candidate

Prescribed others

Senior Professional Staff

COO, CFO, CIO, CMO, some Exec Directors, Directors, Senior Managers

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Academic Board and Regulatory Monitoring of Standards

Governing Legislation and regulatory frameworks

- **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (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

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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
  - 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 early 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.

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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 – See links in Information Booklet

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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

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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?

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Contributing to Academic Board Meetings and the work of Academic Board

Being involved in and outside meetings

- Formal informality – papers and agenda

- Proposer and seconder for motions - rare need for formal voting

- **Everyone** is encouraged to speak, **introduce themselves** and be treated respectfully

- Report from the VC - opportunity to hear and to ask questions

- Reports from committees and major portfolio holders

- Discussion Topics – deep dives on key issues

- Opportunities for involvement outside meetings – Committees

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Getting and Staying Prepared for Academic Board

- Request a mentor – mentors can assist with the complexity of the issues and papers the Board considers

- Ask questions – the Chairs of Academic Board and its committees or the Senior Executive Officer are happy to assist.

- Introductory HESF module – see links in Information Booklet

- Policy Library – develop a facility for navigating the resource (policies A-Z, by area, or through the search function), and the Bulletin Board.

- Leave yourself time to read papers – block out at least 6 hours for meeting preparation.

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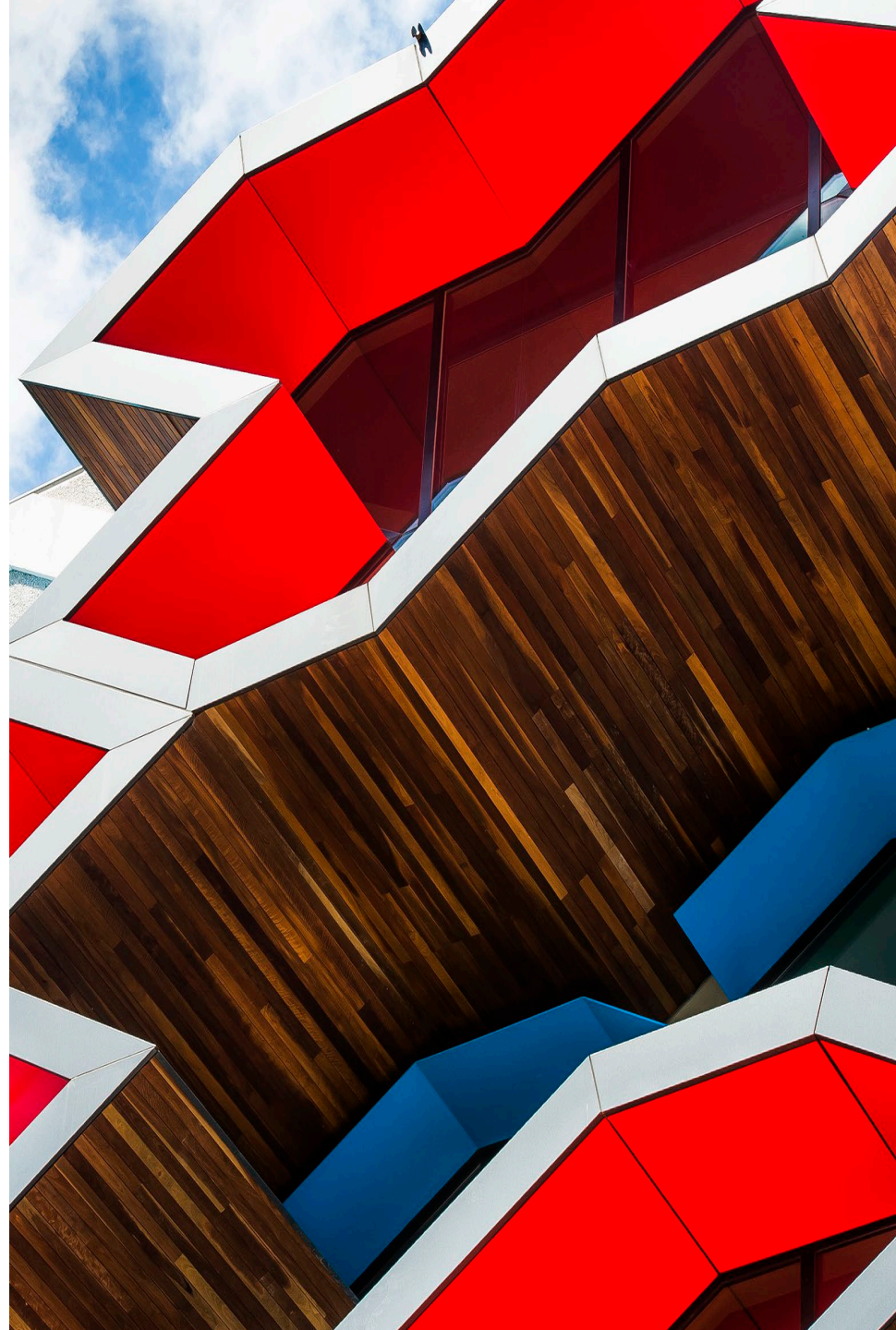
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FAQs

- 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?

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Contemporary Issues facing Academic Board

Food for thought….

- Separation between academic management and academic governance

- Does the Board perform all its roles effectively?

- Which is the most important?

- Are staff and students sufficiently engaged in its work?

- Is the Board simply a rubber stamp?

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Thank you

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