



# Academic Board Induction Program 2026

Professor Carol McKinstry - Chair Academic Board

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# 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

# 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.

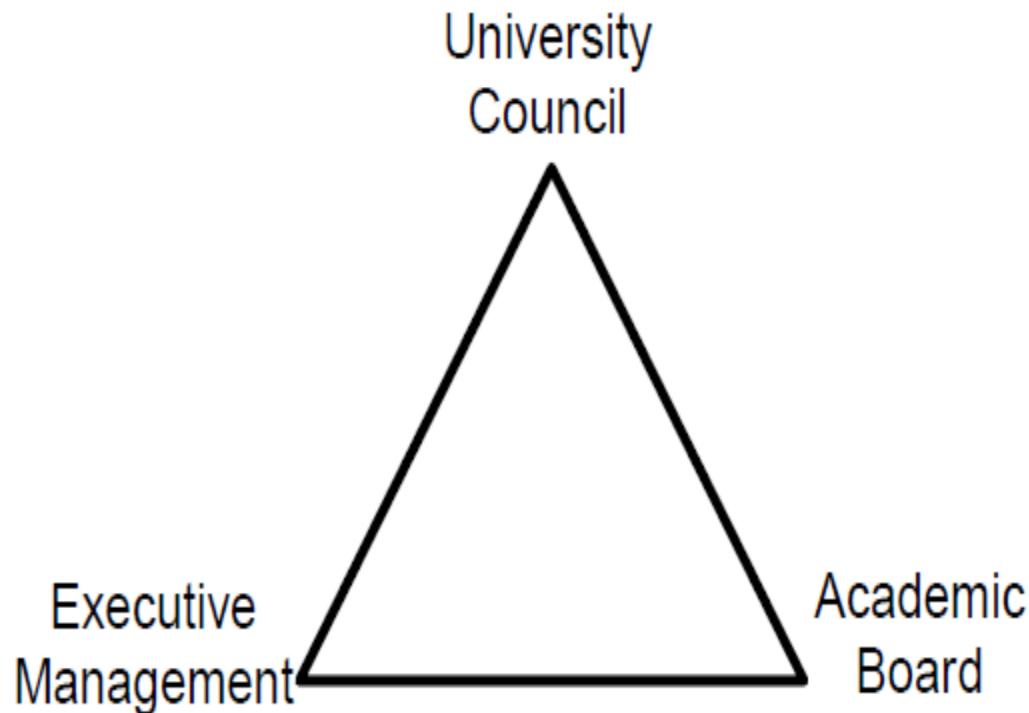
# Role of Council

- 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

# Academic Board

- Accountable to the Council – a sub-committee of Council
- 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.
- 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

# 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 Academic Board

**Academic Board's role and remit are determined by the Academic Board Statute and its Terms of Reference.**

- Academic Board is responsible for approving and monitoring the implementation of policy on academic matters including policies relating to admissions, courses and course monitoring, teaching and learning, assessment, student conduct, research and research training, and academic promotions.
- 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.

# Role of Academic Board

- 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.

*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.*

**In light of the above, the volume of papers for each meeting can be substantial.**

# 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

# 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 Committees

- **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.

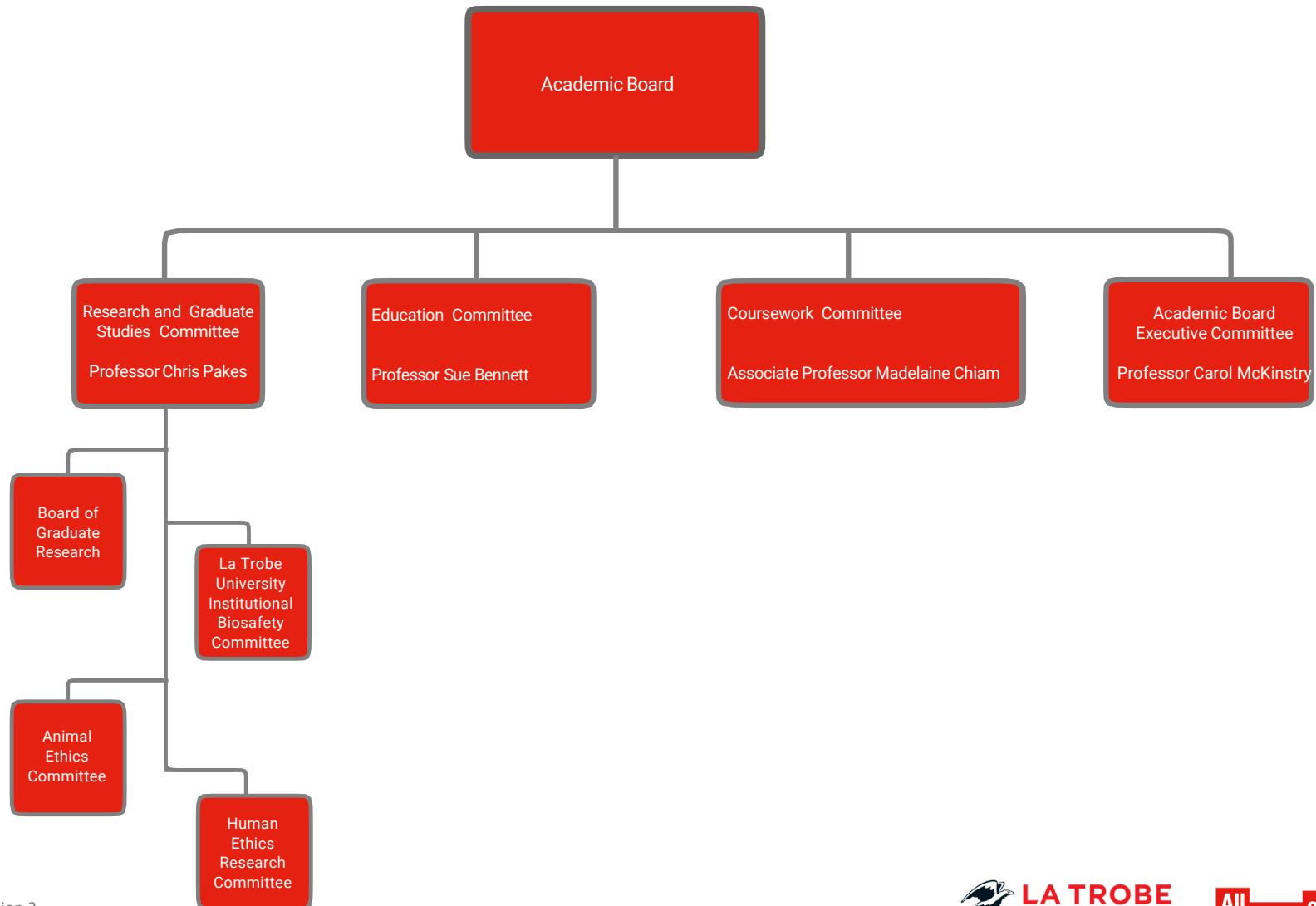
- **Coursework**

- 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.

# Academic Board



# Academic Board Membership

## Ex officio

### Senior Academic Leaders

VC, DVCs, PVCs (Research Training 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

# Academic Board and Regulatory Monitoring of Standards



# Governing Legislation and Frameworks

- **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA)** Peak government body regulating and assuring the quality of higher education in Australia, sets out papers and procedures of regulation.
- **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)** in particular, relating to academic governance; academic leadership; scholarship; and academic quality assurance, course design, staffing, assessment.
- **The Australian Qualifications Framework 2011 (AQF)** Sets out the qualification levels and nomenclature, defines their characteristics including broad learning outcomes, volume, approaches. Pathways and Issuance policies.
- **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)** determining public funding eligibility, supporting teaching and learning, codifying university support for students through the Support for Students Policy (2023)

# 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

# HESF: key concepts and intent

- **Students' right to quality education** including consideration of sub-groups, approaches to support and the integrity of our approach.
- **The standards apply to all** providers, **all** of the standards, **all** of the time. Breaches are self-reportable, but at times, TEQSA send concerns to us.
- **Transparency and consistency** of processes: mechanisms – policies, controls – oversight by accountable committees and roles and operating procedures

***Academic Board plays a significant role in monitoring and assuring through sub-committee work and oversight across all relevant standards.***

TEQSA and the Governing Body (Council) expect the Board to have:

- a detect and correct role, requesting information that the HESF needs to see
- insightful questioning reflected in minutes with actions arising
- reporting back in cycles to close the loop

# For your consideration: Self-Assessment Questions from TEQSA

1. Do members of the academic governing body attend meetings regularly and actively participate in discussions?
2. Is there scope for the academic governing body to delegate tasks to permanent and/or project-specific sub-committees?
3. Is there evidence of academic quality assurance activity?
4. 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?
5. Is there evidence of the implementation of new processes or changes being made to curricula in response to course review, analysis and conclusions?
6. 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 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
- Academic Board Standing Orders – Meeting Protocols
- **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

# 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.
- Read the Academic Board standing Orders – Meeting Protocols
- 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.

# 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?

# 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?

# Academic Board Contacts

Professor Carol McKinstry  
Chair, Academic Board  
E: [C.Mckinstry@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:C.Mckinstry@latrobe.edu.au)  
T: 5448 9111

Sonia Nelson  
Senior Executive Officer, Governance  
E: [Sonia.Nelson@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:Sonia.Nelson@latrobe.edu.au)  
T: 9479 5268

[academicboard@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:academicboard@latrobe.edu.au)



# Thank you

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