

Academic Board Information Booklet

June 2021

ENQUIRIES
academicboard@latrobe.edu.au

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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

La Trobe is a vibrant University which places equity and social justice at the centre of everything it does. The large and well-functioning Academic Board plays a significant role in the University through oversight of all academic policy matters, ensuring compliance with the legislative standards for higher education and providing a forum for debate about academic issues. Membership of the Board includes staff who hold senior academic and professional management positions across the University, the professoriate and elected professional and academic staff. Students are also important members of the Board and include office holders in student associations and elected members.

Much of the work of the Board is done through its four Standing committees: Education, Academic Quality, Research and Graduate Studies, and Coursework as well as an Executive. The Board meets 8 times a year, and receives reports from these committees, approves policies and discusses key matters of academic importance. The Vice Chancellor provides a report at each meeting and is available to take questions from members. Academic Board reports to the University Council and the Chair is an ex officio member of Council.

Membership of the Board provides opportunities for staff and students from all parts of the University to contribute to the governance and strategic directions of the University, develop leadership skills and broaden their understanding of how complex higher education institutions function. As well as participating in Academic Board meetings, members can also be involved in the committee work of the Board. Each Academic Board Standing Committee has four staff members nominated by the Board and at least two student members nominated by the student associations.

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board are elected every two years from among the professoriate. I would like to extend a welcome to all members of Board and encourage you to become involved by contributing your particular expertise and skills to the work of Board and in realising the mission of La Trobe University.

Kind regards

Professor Christine Bigby

Chair

Academic Board

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

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.

In addition to information about the University's mission, the Act sets out the constitution and governance of the University.

University Council

The role of the Council is to:

- a. Appoint and monitor the performance of the Vice-Chancellor.
- b. Approve the mission and strategic direction, annual budget and business plan.
- c. Oversee and review management and performance.
- d. Establish policy consistent with legal requirements and community expectations.
- e. Monitor accountability.
- f. Monitor risk.
- g. Oversee and monitor academic activity.
- h. Approve significant University commercial activities.

Membership of Council includes the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Academic Board, four Governor-in-Council appointed members, five Council appointed members, two elected members (one staff member and one student) and one Ministerial appointment.

The work of Council is supported by five Committees:

- Corporate Governance Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Human Resources Planning Committee
- Infrastructure and Estates Planning Committee
- Foundation Committee

- Reset and Recovery Committee
- Digital Transformation Committee

Academic Board

Under the *Act* the Council establishes Academic Board and determines its powers, functions and membership. Council does this through the [Academic Board Statute 2009](#). The *Statute* sets out the functions, powers and duties of the Board as follows:

- Establish, review and monitor the implementation of academic policies and procedures (subject to Council review)
- Oversee and review the operations of the University in relation to admission to courses, academic progress, examinations, assessment and academic misconduct
- Determine the requirements for degrees, diplomas and other awards
- Promote high standards of teaching, learning and research
- Oversee the review of academic programs and organisation units engaged in teaching and research
- Determine the conditions for competition for, and awarding or, any fellowship, scholarship or prize
- Determine the requirements for academic staff promotions and senior academic appointments at Levels D and E
- Provide a forum to facilitate debate on academic matters affecting the University
- Consider and advise the Vice-Chancellor and the Council on academic matters and any other issue relating to academic standards at the University.

The functions of the Board are explained further in the [Terms of Reference](#). The origins of Academic Board are in the tradition of a university as a community of scholars – model of consultation, collegiality and broad-based representation. Academic Board works in partnership with others in furthering the mission of the University, but is independent of the Vice-Chancellor and senior management. As a Sub-Committee of Council, Academic Board is accountable and reports to the Council.

At its heart the role of Academic 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

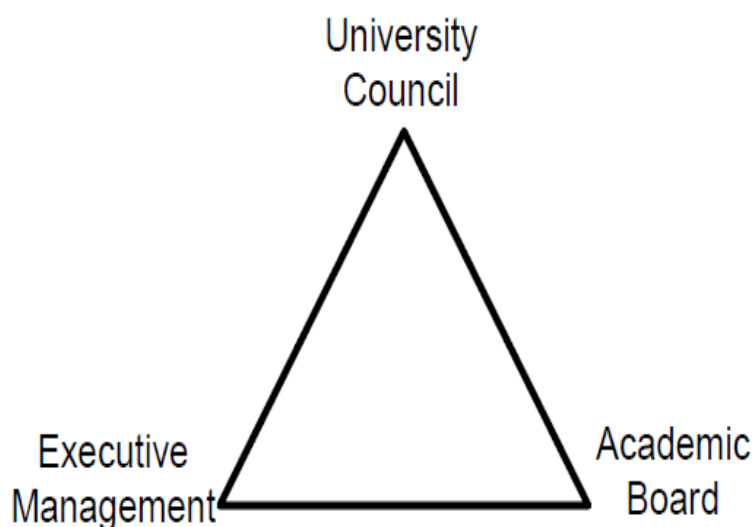
Academic Board membership and Standing Committees are discussed below.

Vice-Chancellor

The *Act* provides for there to be a Vice-Chancellor and President of the University whom Council is responsible for appointing. The Vice-Chancellor is “the chief executive officer of the University generally responsible for the conduct of the University’s affairs in all matters...”

The Senior Executive Group and its four Sub-Committees (Regional Committee, Course Portfolio and Scholarships Committee, International Strategy and Policy Committee, Research Strategy Committee and Occupational Health and Safety Committee) is responsible for overseeing matters relating to the University strategy and budget and provides advice to the Vice-Chancellor on matters relating to the planning and resourcing of the University. Membership of the Senior Executive Group includes the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the College Provosts, the Vice-President (Strategy and Development), Chief Transformation Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and the Executive Director (Human Resources).

These three key entities are referred to as the tripartite governance model of Australian Universities (Shattock 2012)



GOVERNING LEGISLATION AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA)

TEQSA is the peak government body and legislative instrument regulating and assuring the quality of higher education in Australia, including the application of the AQF and ESOS. TEQSA is an independent statutory authority established in 2011 after the Bradley Review – replaced AUQA. The Agency sits within the portfolio of Australian Government Department of Education and Training and is responsible for the registration and regulation of all providers; accreditation of courses for non-self-accrediting non-university providers (Universities self-accredit their courses).

TEQSA has substantial powers including setting conditions on registration, 'cease and desist' powers, and deregistration, 'detect and monitor'. Decisions are public.

La Trobe's re-registration is scheduled for 2023 and preparation commenced in 2020. The University's re-registration will address every standard (see below) with evidence and controls. TEQSA will look at the functions of academic governance, and the Board and its standing committees, against the Standards.

La Trobe's Office of Quality and Standards facilitates compliance in academic governance and education standards and the Office of Strategy and Development facilitate corporate governance compliance.

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?

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (HESF)

The Higher Education Standards Framework is a set of standards that all providers must meet to enter and remain within Australia's higher education system. The framework contains 7 domains with 24 sections and includes 103 statements. The domains are:

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

The key intent of the Framework is that:

- **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.

An **Introductory module** is available - <https://latrobe.learningseatlms.com/Dashboard>

Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework 2011 (AQF) sets out the qualification levels and nomenclature and defines their characteristics including broad learning outcomes, volume, approaches.

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS) and Code of Practice 2018

The ESOS Act governs delivery of education to onshore international students, including ELICOS. It contains eleven detailed standards on provision of educational services.

Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)

The Higher Education Support Act governs higher education reporting to government for funding.

MEMBERSHIP OF ACADEMIC BOARD

Currently, there are approximately 250 members of Academic Board who are;

- Staff and students who are members because of the office they hold, and are known as ex officio members, and
- Elected staff and students

In addition, sixteen senior professional staff responsible for key administrative divisions, are known as prescribed persons and attend Academic Board meetings.

Ex officio Members

- Chair and Deputy Chair
- Senior Executive
- Pro Vice-Chancellors
- University Librarian
- Chairs of Academic Board Standing Committees
- Heads of each regional campus
- Associate/Deputy Provosts (Academic Partnerships, Learning and Teaching, Research and Industry Engagement, and International)
- Heads of Schools
- Heads of Departments
- the Professoriate
- the Presidents of the student organisations

Elected Members

- 30 elected academic staff – 15 level A/B and 15 level C/D
- 10 elected professional staff
- 5 elected students – 3 undergraduate and 2 postgraduate, including students from regional campuses.

The term of office for elected staff is two years and elected students one year.

Elections

Elections are governed by the [Academic Board Regulations 2019](#).

Elections for the Chair and Deputy Chair are held every two years. Only professors of the University are eligible for nomination – the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors and their direct reports are not eligible (with the exception of Directors of Research Centres). All professors who are also members of Academic Board are eligible to vote in elections for Chair and Deputy Chair.

Elections for elected student members are held every year. Elections for elected staff members are held every two years. All elections are conducted electronically.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair presides over Academic Board meetings and ensures that its business is managed effectively. The Chair is responsible for:

- Chairing Academic Board in the interest of the University and implementation of the University's Strategic Plan.
- Ensuring the Board is operating within its objectives/terms of reference and delegations of authority, and in accordance with University policy and legislation
- Maintaining order and focus on meeting priorities
- Leading and encouraging relevant discussion on items
- Facilitating fair and open discussion.

Role of Members

Members of Academic Board provide valuable input into decision-making on a wide range of academic matters, including approval of academic policies and procedures. Members are expected to:

- Attend meetings regularly.
- Prepare for meetings by thoroughly reviewing the agenda and papers.
- Address the issue/agenda item under discussion when speaking.
- Express opinions during debate, but listen to and value others when they have the floor.
- Provide full attention to discussion and refrain from distractions such as email.
- Adhere to professional and respectful behaviour during meetings.
- Respect the role of the Chair as leader of the meeting and abide by their rulings in relation to meeting procedure.
- Always acting in the best interests of the University as a whole, with this obligation to be observed in priority to any duty a member may owe to their academic or professional area.
- Communicate decisions and discussions of Academic Board, and promote the role and activities of the Board within their College or Division.
- Maintain an understanding of the Board's role in governance at La Trobe and the regulatory environment within which the University operates.
- Complete the biannual Academic Board Self-Review Survey.

Role of the Executive Officer

The Executive Officer provides high-level, professional secretariat and executive services to the Board. Under the *Academic Board Regulations 2019*, the Executive Officer is also the Returning Officer for Academic Board elections. The Executive Officer is responsible for facilitating the efficient operation of the Board by:

- Collating and publishing the agenda and papers for each meeting
- Recording the business of the meeting (minutes)
- Managing logistics for Academic Board meetings
- Providing advice, information and administrative services to the Chair and Deputy Chair, and
- Preparing papers as required.
- Running Academic Board election processes.

MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC BOARD

Dates

Academic Board meets 8 times a year. Meetings are held from 9.30am to 11.00am on the second Wednesday of each month, with the exception of January, April, July and December. Meeting dates are approved at the September meeting for the following year and are published in the [2021 Senior Governance Committee Meeting Dates](#). This document also includes paper submission dates for the Board and its Standing Committees.

Agenda

The Agenda is published on the [Academic Board Unite site](#) one week before each meeting. Uploads include the agenda, individual papers and a combined file 'Agenda and Papers'. Any 'to follow' papers are usually distributed at least two days prior to each meeting and are also uploaded to the Unite site. All staff in the University have access to Academic Board papers, but they should be regarded as confidential internal documents not for external release.

Members wishing to submit a paper for Academic Board should contact the Chair or Executive Officer in the first instance.

Meetings

Attendance

It is acknowledged there will be times when members are unable to attend, or need to arrive late or leave early due to teaching and/or other commitments. However, where possible Academic Board members should attend meetings regularly. Apologies may be sent to academicboard@latrobe.edu.au or by declining the calendar invitation for the meeting.

Procedures

The proceedings of Academic Board meetings are governed by [Academic Board's Procedures and Standing Orders](#).

Agenda items which are marked with an asterisk are 'starred' for discussion. At the opening of each meeting, Members are given an opportunity to star additional items for discussion. Unstarred items are then approved as a block.

Meetings are conducted formally – members will be invited to speak by the Chair. All members are welcome to contribute to discussions. However, in the interests of time, members should refrain from re-iterating points already made. At the end of the discussion on each starred item, the Chair will call for a proposer and seconder for the motion. The motion is then put to the meeting.

The Minutes from each meeting are published on the Academic Board Unite site. Action memos are distributed to the originating Committee and relevant individuals as required.

ACADEMIC BOARD STANDING COMMITTEES

The work of Academic Board is supported by five Standing Committees. Each Committee reports to Academic Board after its meetings. In addition, the Academic Board Annual Work Plan/Business Schedule sets out the reports Academic Board expects to receive throughout the year. In addition, each Committee completes an annual review, assessing its activities throughout the year against its terms of reference and reporting attendance.

Each Committee has a specific area of focus. The Terms of Reference and composition of each Committee are available from the [Directory of Committees](#).

Academic Board Executive Committee

Academic Board Executive Committee was created in 2017 and established from 2018 to better coordinate the work of the Standing Committees, identify key agenda items and topics for panel discussions, and review requests for out-of-session approvals that involve policy change or other matters of significance.

The Committee is also responsible for reviewing Academic Board agendas with attention to items starred for discussion, developing the annual work plan for Academic Board and reviewing the annual work plans for Academic Board Standing Committees.

Membership of the Committee currently includes the Chair and Deputy Chair of Academic Board, the Chair of Coursework Committee, the Deputy Chairs of Education and Research and Graduate Studies Committees and eight nominated members from Academic Board.

Academic Quality Committee

Academic Quality Committee was established in February 2011 in response to the 2010 AUQA Audit Report, the then draft Provider Registration Standards for the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency and the University's legislative, statutory and regulatory requirements.

Academic Quality Committee monitors and advises Academic Board on compliance with key academic policies, including recommended actions and effectiveness of procedures, and monitors the academic policy framework and its compliance with the relevant TEQSA Higher Education Standards. The Committee receives annual reports from Standing Committees and advises Academic Board on School review reports and responses, and recommendations for management action. It receives and reviews reports about third-party delivery of La Trobe programs relative to academic standards, and quality and compliance with academic policies. The Committee considers other academic quality matters as determined by the Academic Board, the Vice-Chancellor or Council.

Academic Quality Committee is chaired by the Deputy Chair of Academic Board. Membership includes the Directors – Education Services, Quality and Standards, and Student Administration, the Executive Director, Planning and Governance, nominees of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement), a member of each College Education Team, four academic board nominees, and two student nominees.

Coursework Committee

Coursework Committee was established as the Programs Committee of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee in May 2009 and became a standing Committee of Academic Board in 2014.

Coursework Committee considers proposals for new or substantially changed courses, new instances of existing courses, and closure or suspension of courses. It also considers reports of academic course reviews, including monitoring progress on key recommendations. The Committee approves new or revised subjects not belonging to any College and ensures appropriate alignment of La Trobe University's coursework programs with University policy and quality assurance processes, the higher Education Standards Framework, and the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Coursework Committee is chaired by a senior academic appointed by Academic Board. Membership includes the Associate/Deputy Provosts (Learning and Teaching), Directors of Quality and Standards, and Student Administration, nominees of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International)(regional nominee), four academic Board nominees, and two student nominees. There are three co-opted members from La Trobe International, Education Services, and the Library.

Education Committee

Education Committee was originally established as the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee in 2008. The Committee's name and Terms of Reference were revised in 2011.

The remit of Education Committee is quality in relation to admissions, curriculum, teaching and learning policies, processes and outcomes and reporting to Academic Board on student lifecycle data, quality improvement initiatives and policy implementation. The Committee has an advisory role to Academic Board on strategic directions and priorities, and emerging issues and external influences of relevance to educational quality. It also receives and responds to advice from Coursework Committee on curriculum, and teaching and learning matters arising from course approvals and reviews.

Education Committee has one Sub-Committee – the Disability Access and Inclusion Sub-Committee. In early 2021, following the Academic Board Review – Self-Assessment, the work of Admissions Committee was amalgamated with Education Committee and the former disestablished.

Education Committee is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). Membership includes a senior academic appointed by Academic Board as Deputy Chair, the Associate/Deputy Provosts (Learning and Teaching), the Directors – Education Services, Quality and Standards, and Student Administration, the University Librarian, the Chairs of Coursework Committee and the Disability Access and Inclusion Sub-Committee, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students), Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research), Executive Director, Planning and Governance, four Academic Board nominees, and two student nominees.

Research and Graduate Studies Committee

Research and Graduate Studies Committee was established in December 1990 to consider and advise Academic Board on the development, adoption, implementation and review of relevant policies, the development and implementation of the University's Research Strategy, monitoring quality and standards in relation to research and research training, and ethics approvals, the establishment, disestablishment and renewal of Research Centres and Institutes, applications for higher doctorates and reports from its Sub-Committees. The Committee has five sub-Committees – Animal Ethics Committee, Board of Graduate Research, Human Ethics Research Committee, La Trobe Institutional Biosafety Committee and the Higher Doctorates Committee.

The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement). Membership includes a senior academic appointed by Academic Board as Deputy Chair, the Pro Vice-Chancellors - Research Capability, and Graduate and Global Research, the Associate Provosts (Research and Industry Engagement), the University Librarian, a senior indigenous researcher nominated by Academic Board, four Academic Board nominated members, two candidates nominated by the Graduate Researchers Team, the Executive Director, Research Office, and the Chairs of Research and Graduate Studies Committee sub-committees.

Academic Board nominated membership of Committees

As outlined above, with the exception of Academic Board Executive Committee, membership of each Standing Committee includes four Academic Board nominated academic staff members. As staggered terms of office are in place, positions are filled annually through an Expression of Interest process. Members are encouraged to submit an expression of interest which should address the key attributes required for the relevant committee. For example, 'experience in policy compliance and an understanding of the Higher Education Standards Framework.'

Expressions of interest should be no more than one page, address the required attributes and outline the additional skills/experience you would bring to the role. Expressions of interest must be submitted by the due date/time specified in the call.

Selection will be undertaken by Academic Board Executive Committee taking into consideration the skills mix, diversity and geographical location of the existing membership of the Committee and based on the expression of interest submitted. Recommendations will then be made to Academic Board for approval.

Prior to submitting an expression of interest, members should consider the [terms of reference](#) and [meeting schedule](#) for the relevant committee to ensure capacity to attend meetings.

ACCESSING INFORMATION

Legislation

[La Trobe University Act 2009](#)

[University Statutes](#) (including Academic Board Statute)

[University Regulations](#) (including Academic Board Regulations)

Academic Board and Standing Committees

[Terms of Reference and Membership](#) (Directory of Committees)

[Academic Board website](#)

[Academic Board election information](#)

Meetings

[2021 Senior Governance Committee Meeting Dates](#)

[Academic Board Agenda and Papers](#)

Useful Resources

[TEQSA Guidance Notes](#) - see in particular:

- [Academic Governance](#)
- [Academic Quality Assurance](#)
- [Monitoring and Analysis of Student Performance](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework](#)

Higher Education Standards Framework - [Introductory module](#)

[The Purpose and Function of Academic Boards and Senates in Australian Universities](#)

[La Trobe Policy Library](#)