

## Roles and Responsibilities of Members on Academic Senate and its Standing Committees

Members of committees including elected, appointed and ex-officio staff and students, play vital roles on University committees, providing invaluable advice and input to decisions and the decision-making processes.

Academic Senate (Senate) is the peak forum of the University for academic debate and discourse, and the primary custodian of academic values and standards for the University. It is a standing committee of the University's governing body, the Board of Trustees, and its functions are outlined in the [Academic Governance Policy](#). In practice, Senate and its committees are responsible for approving academic policies, the curriculum for courses and units, student grades and graduation lists, guiding and monitoring research and its practices, providing advice to the Vice-Chancellor and Board of Trustees on a wide range of academic matters, playing an influential role in academic decision-making, and protecting the quality and integrity of the University's academic programs.

The Academic Senate Standing Committees (including School Academic Committees) are defined by resolutions of the Academic Senate. Details of the current Academic Senate Standing Committees can be found on the [Academic Senate Standing Committees](#) website.

### **Roles of Elected Members on Academic Senate and Standing Committees**

If you are seeking election to Academic Senate or any of its Standing Committees, please familiarise yourself with the following roles.

### **Elected Academic Staff Members from Schools and Research Institutes**

As an elected representative on Academic Senate from your School, *you will also become a member of the School Academic Committee and the School Research and Higher Degree Research Committee.*

All members will have the opportunity to provide comment and feedback on a range of issues within Senate's (and its Standing Committees') domain, including but not limited to:

- The monitoring of academic standards, values and quality assurance.
- Emerging issues in the Higher Education sector and potential implications for the University.
- Proposed changes to Academic Policies.
- The quality and development of research.
- Accrediting and approving course, programs, units and articulation agreements.
- Approving Academic Senate's Workplan.
- Informing the School of Senate priorities, practices and discussion and contributing to Senate with an understanding of the relevant issues and priorities for the School.

You will also play an important role in promoting communication within your School and/or Research Institute, and across the University community, about a wide range of academic issues and the activities of Senate and its Standing Committees.

There are also opportunities to serve on working parties and other Senate Standing Committees and positions are canvassed for nominations and elections from time to time as necessary.

### **Responsibilities of Members**

The responsibilities outlined below are relevant for all elected, appointed and ex-officio staff and student members on Academic Senate, Academic Senate Standing Committees including School Committees.

1. As a member of an academic governance committee of the University, you are required to act in good faith and in the best interests of the University as a whole.
2. It is important for nominees and voters to understand that elected members do not 'represent' the constituencies from which they are drawn in the way that a member of Parliament represents their constituents. Rather they are expected to bring a staff or student perspective to the committee. All members, whether appointed or elected, are required to act at all times in the interests of the University rather than as delegates representing sectional interests.
3. Academic committees operate in a collegial manner and need active members who will attend all meetings, read the papers with care (the committee secretary and Chair will be able to answer your questions about the papers and the operation of the committee), contribute to discussion from their perspective, and ask questions. Further information on the procedures for meetings is contained in the [Standing Orders](#).
4. Members are expected to attend all meetings, as a quorum is essential. The [Academic Governance Policy](#) contains provisions relating to apologies and absences, and you should be familiar with these requirements. It is important to note that the position of an elected or appointed member of Senate (or a Standing Committee) becomes vacant where the member is absent from three consecutive meetings, without leave having been granted by the committee.
5. Where a member has an interest in a matter, or is perceived to have an interest, it must be declared and managed to ensure integrity and transparency. The committee Chair can answer any questions about whether an interest needs to be declared. Once a committee member declares an interest in a matter before the committee, it is then up to the Chair/committee to determine if it is a conflict and how the matter should be dealt with. Please refer to the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) for more information.
6. Most academic committee meetings are open meetings, however confidentiality is expected with regard to those matters noted as confidential or discussed in closed session.

*Prepared by the Office of Governance Services*