

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



ACADEMIC SENATE OUTCOMES Meeting 26/02

Meeting 26/02 of the Academic Senate, Western Sydney University was held on Friday 8 May 2026 at 9:30 am, via zoom.

INTRODUCTION

Academic Senate is the peak academic body of the University, and a forum for academic debate, policy development and decision-making. It is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees and reports to and advises the Executive and the Board on academic matters. It monitors academic standards, values, academic risk management and quality assurance as well as collaborations and partnerships. Senate also accredits and approves courses, programs and subjects and approves the conferral of academic awards. **For more information, agendas and minutes of Senate meetings:**

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/about_uws/leadership/academic_senate.

Following is a list of outcomes and key topics for information and discussion within your organisational unit.

STRATEGIC ITEMS

Teaching Quality Framework

Senate was informed that the Teaching Quality Framework (TQF) had been launched in March 2026 and made available via the TQF SharePoint site within Education HQ. The framework outlined expectations across career stages and provided a way to articulate teaching experience. The TQF was intended to underpin promotion, recruitment, probation, and performance processes, with promotion and recruitment being currently in primary focus. Performance would be reflected in PACE processes, where the TQF would provide ways to articulate achievements, and this would be important for promotion as well. The TQF would also be important in professional development of staff, including particularly casual staff, in a revised FULT program, in TNE contexts, and the TQF would assist peer review processes. It was also announced that the Learning and Teaching Awards would include an award for casual staff. During discussion, the need for greater support for Subject Coordinators, particularly early- and mid-career academics, was highlighted, and ongoing enhancement of guidance, training, and integration was acknowledged, with members encouraged to provide feedback.

Uplifting the Educational Experience at Western

Professor Maryanne Dever, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Students updated Senate highlighting strategic work to increase the University's attractiveness for students by focusing on a stronger alignment between offerings and student success, guided by the University's 2030 strategy. Emphasis was placed on ensuring programs met both student and industry needs, with student satisfaction and retention supported by clear pathways to employment and future careers. It was noted that job readiness was a key driver of student choice. Updates were provided on collaboration with The College and Schools to align offerings with market demand and develop a cohesive product strategy and program portfolio, alongside the introduction of a decision-making matrix informed by market insights and success measures

such as student outcomes, awards, and employer satisfaction. During the discussion, consideration of international student perspectives, the importance of strong career services (including for postgraduate programs), and the need for generalist degrees to clearly articulate transferable skills and career pathways were highlighted, with it being noted that a compelling value proposition and clearer communication of long-term benefits were critical.

Academic Risk Management

Professor Cath Ellis, Pro Vice-Chancellor Quality and Integrity reported that the Education Quality team were developing an Academic Risk Register in collaboration with the risk team. The register consolidated key risks aligning with TEQSA requirements, including TEQSA's proposed *Regulatory Risk Framework* (RRF). The register would allow standard risk assessment reporting to Academic Senate. It was anticipated that the register would be submitted for endorsement in Q3 of 2026. Senate requested that the risk assessment would include relevant risk appetite statements and an evaluation against that as a separate column in the register, in line with the University's general approach to risk.

REPORTS AND UPDATES:

Student Report

Mr Prasad Perera, the outgoing Higher Degrees Research Student Representative reflected positively on his tenure, noting he was pleased to have supported discussions that led to improvements for HDR students. He encouraged continued progress, particularly in relation to the use of AI.

His contributions to Academic Senate were gratefully acknowledged.

Research performance

Academic Senate was presented with a scorecard, which measured research performance in terms of metrics that had been agreed on at the December meeting. It was acknowledged that this represented a major step forward in tracking research performance and quality and in providing transparency. However, at present there were limitations that made it difficult for Academic Senate to provide an effective assessment in many rubrics. These limitations included significant data lags – often 2025 data was not available – the level of data, lack of trends and analysis, the capturing of Non-Traditional Outputs (NTROs) and collaborations. Senate was informed about the difficulties in obtaining relevant and current data and resourcing constraints, and the efforts to overcome them.

Questions on Notice

Good Practice Guidelines and Timelines

A question was raised as to whether a set of Good Practice Guidelines and timelines for regular program reviews in line with the Higher Education Standards had been, or could be, developed, and if so, whether these could be shared with the University community. A written response was provided that highlighted the following:

- In 2024-2025, the University had decided to pause scheduled course review cycles for one year.
- All active awards remained well within the seven-year review requirement stipulated in the HESF. There was no risk of non-compliance.
- The University was reviewing its approach to course reviewing, considering a return a seven-year cycle, more regular but lighter-touch monitoring and the implementation of a "Reviewer" module in the Curriculum Management Platform (CMP). Consultation

with the academic community is ongoing until September. The result would be a document with clear Good Practice Guidelines, timelines and supporting processes for course and program review.

Microcredentials

A question was raised as to whether any microcredentials had been developed since early 2025, and, if so, what they were and what records existed demonstrating independent academic oversight, noting that the Microcredentials Management Committee had not met during this period. It was advised that a paper on microcredentials policy and procedures would be presented to the Senate Education Committee at its next meeting and subsequently to Academic Senate.

Program Advice

A question was raised, regarding what measures and review processes had been implemented to improve the quality and timeliness of student program advising ahead of the anticipated Spring semester demand, including whether institutional capacity had been assessed and whether data existed on student perceptions of the transition from academic to professional staff advising. The response highlighted the following:

- The improvement of student program advice was part of a significant student services stabilisation project consisting of 46 projects aiming at a general service enhancement. Significant challenges were acknowledged but challenges were being taken very seriously.
- Student enquiries were in focus with the approach emphasising self-help measures.
- The internal structures of how student support is managed had been changed significantly to provide better service.
- A mapping of capacities had been conducted.
- General feedback had been positive, but no targeted pre- and post hoc study.
- A simplified curriculum structure would contribute to less need for program advice.

Implementation of the external review recommendations

Senate was informed on the relatively fast implementation of the recommendations made in the external review report (the MinterEllison Report). Currently, 4 out of 9 recommendations had been implemented with the remainder to be implemented by the end of the year. A one-year review of the implementation was also planned.

APPROVALS:

Proposal-20345 SOA Programs for Suspension and Discontinuation from Spring 2026

It was resolved (AS 26/02:03):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 20245, and notes the program discontinuations, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21236 Graduate Certificate in Health Support

It was resolved (AS 26/02:04):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21236, and approves the new programs and program discontinuation, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21234 Graduate Diploma in Health Support (Exit Only)

It was resolved (AS 26/02:05):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21234, and approves the new programs and program discontinuation, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21019 Bachelor of Nursing

It was resolved (AS 26/02:06):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21019, and approves the new programs and program discontinuation, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21228 Diploma in Health Support (Exit)

It was resolved (AS 26/02:07):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21228, and approves the new programs and program discontinuation, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21233 Master of Nursing Practice (Preregistration)

It was resolved (AS 26/02:08):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21233, and approves the new programs and program discontinuation, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21232 Bachelor of Nursing - WSU Online

It was resolved (AS 26/02:09):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21232, and approves the new programs and program discontinuation, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21229 Associate Degree in Health Support (Exit)

It was resolved (AS 26/02:10):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21229, and approves the new programs and program discontinuation, and approves associated transition arrangements.

Proposal-21756 2816 Master of Business Analytics

It was resolved (AS 26/02:11):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 21756 and approves the program variation.

Proposal-20493 2848 Bachelor of Laws, Replacing 2502 B Laws (Non-Graduate Entry), Associated Programs & New Subjects

It was resolved (AS 26/02:12):

That the Academic Senate considers proposal 20493, and:

a) approves the new programs 2848 B Laws, replacing 2502 and 2849 B Laws (Honours), replacing 2829, and;

b) notes the program discontinuations, and approves associated transition arrangements.

2848 Bachelor of Laws

2502 Bachelor of Laws (Non graduate entry)

2849 Bachelor of Laws (Honours)

2829 Bachelor of Laws (Non Graduate Entry) (Honours)

2827 Diploma in Laws (exit only)

Proposal-20370 Master of Information And Communications Technology (Advanced)

It was resolved (AS 26/02:13):

That the Academic Senate notes the Provost's approval for the program discontinuation in proposal 20370 and approves associated transition arrangements.

Scholarships

It was resolved (AS 26/02:14):

The Academic Senate reviewed and approved the proposed amendments to existing scholarships, new donor funded prizes and amendments to existing donor funded prizes for immediate execution.

Amendments to Existing Scholarships

Robert Hayes Memorial Scholarship for Law

New Donor Funded Prizes

R Legal Prize for Contracts (LAWS 7047)

McInnes Wilson Lawyers Prize for Law of Employment

Best Writing Award for Postdoctoral Grant Development

Amendments to Existing Prizes

Advise Wise Award for First in SOA in Financial Planning

Conferrals

It was noted that Academic Senate would receive an annual conferral report going forward, and it was requested that all HDR matters be reviewed and approved by the Research Committee in future.

February Conferral of University Awards

It was resolved (AS 26/02:15):

The Academic Senate:

- i. noted the award of degrees with distinction to graduands listed *Attachment A – Graduands for awards with distinction*
- ii. noted the award of the University Medal to the graduates listed in *Attachment B – Graduates to be awarded the University Medal*
- iii. noted the conferral of awards to graduates with pass or honours coursework degrees as listed in *Attachment C - Graduates with pass and honours coursework degrees approved within Registrar and Chair - Academic Senate*
- iv. approved the conferral of awards to graduates with a research degree as listed in *Attachment D - Graduates with research degrees*
- v. noted the conferral of the posthumous award as listed in *Attachment E – Posthumous graduates with research degrees approved within Registrar and Chair - Academic Senate*

April Conferral of University Awards

It was resolved (AS 26/02:16):

The Academic Senate:

- i. noted the award of degrees with distinction to graduands listed *Attachment A – Graduands for awards with distinction*
- ii. noted the award of the University Medal to the graduates listed in *Attachment B – Graduates to be awarded the University Medal*

- iii. noted the conferral of awards to graduates with pass or honours coursework degrees as listed in *Attachment C - Graduates with pass and honours coursework degrees approved within Registrar*
- iv. approved the conferral of awards to graduates with a research degree as listed in *Attachment D - Graduates with research degrees*
- v. noted the conferral of the posthumous award as listed in Attachment E – *Posthumous graduates with research degrees approved within Registrar and Chair - Academic Senate*

Amendment to the Course Programs Committee Terms of Reference

The Chair of the Coursework Programs Committee (CPC) noted that its predecessor, APCAC, had a broader academic membership than CPC and that increasing academic representation, alongside inclusion of a professional staff member, would strengthen the quality and robustness of curriculum review it carries out. The absence of Head of Discipline representation was identified as a significant gap, particularly in the context of the restructure, with the proposed changes seen as an opportunity to build capacity and broaden participation. It was also suggested that the nomination process be clarified and potentially adjusted to explicitly include consultation with Executive Deans, ensuring consistency across terms of reference, with Academic Senate agreeing on the need to improve clarity around how nominations are sought, confirmed, and implemented in practice.

It was resolved (AS 26/02:17):

That the Academic Senate approved as attached the amendments to the Coursework Program Committee Terms of Reference.

Amendment to the Institutes Academic Board Terms of Reference

It was noted that an Institutes Council had been established following Reset, and that proposed amendments to an Institutes Academic Board primarily related to changes in membership. Challenges in securing nominees for certain Indigenous membership positions were acknowledged, with agreement reached to further consider appropriate approaches to ensure meaningful representation. Additional amendments included revised reporting lines, removal of a senior executive role from membership, and adjustments to Indigenous representation provisions. Discussion also highlighted the need to clarify governance arrangements for Honours and Master of Research programs, particularly in relation to approval pathways, with concerns raised about inconsistencies in policy frameworks and the potential for duplication across governing bodies, underscoring the need for clearer and more consistent decision-making structures.

It was resolved (AS 26/02:18):

That Academic Senate approves the updates to the Terms of Reference of the Institutes Academic Board pending changes noted below:

Clause 2(j): Amendment to reporting lines, with reports to be directed to the Senate Assessment Committee rather than the Senate Education Committee.

Clause 3(d): Removal of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students from membership.

Clause 3(e): Removal of the designated Indigenous position while ensuring appropriate and meaningful Indigenous representation is maintained.

Disestablishment of the Senate Executive Committee

It was resolved (AS 26/02:19):

That Academic Senate approves the disestablishment of the Senate Executive Committee noting that all urgent matters be determined via e-meeting.

Prepared by: Professor Robert Mailhammer, Chair, Academic Senate, and Ms Georgia Vasiliadis, Senior Governance Officer

Date: 15 May 2026

If you require any further information on any of these items, including relevant papers, or if you would like to attend a meeting of Academic Senate as an observer, please contact the Chair of Academic Senate, Professor Robert Mailhammer

(R.Mailhammer@westernsydney.edu.au)