



Academic Board
Information for New Members
2022

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About Academic Board

Every Australian University has a body known as the Academic Board, Academic Senate, or similar. As the University's peak academic body, the Monash University Academic Board is responsible for the maintenance of high standards in teaching and research and acts to assist the University in ensuring the highest quality of its academic endeavours.

The origins of academic boards lie in the tradition of the university as a community of scholars. It has been said that "they remain as perhaps the most significant, formal, contemporary expression of the mediaeval heritage of modern universities and the characteristic collegiality associated with the academy ..."¹

Key events in the history of the development of Monash's Academic Board include:

- The first meeting of the Professorial Board (the direct precursor to the Academic Board) - 8 November 1960.
- Change of name to Academic Board - 1990².
- First meeting chaired by an elected President - 7 April 2004.
- Adoption of formal Terms of Reference - 21 November 2007.
- Approval of revised membership by Council - 8 December 2008.
- Further refinement to the Board's membership approved by Council – 4 November 2010.
- Endorsement of revised Terms of Reference – 4 June 2014.
- Council approval of revised Terms of Reference – 25 June 2014.

Academic Board is chaired by an elected President (also known as the Chair), who is supported by two elected Vice-Presidents (Deputy Chairs.)

Legislation

The current Monash legislation relating to Academic Board – the Monash University Statute and subordinate Regulations - is accessible from the following legislation page of the University Solicitor's website:

<http://monash.edu/legal/legislation/current-statute-regulations-and-related-resolutions/index.html>

¹ Cited in Hilary Winchester "Academic Board and the Academy: Seizing the Moment", AUQF 2007, p.2

² *Monash University (Chisholm and Gippsland) Act 1990*, No. 22 of 1990

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Academic Board Terms of Reference

Approved by Council 25 June 2014

(incorporating amendments as at 1 December 2019)

Preamble

Pursuant to section 20 of the Monash University Act 2009 Council has established the Academic Board and assigned to it a range of powers and functions (Council Regulation 10(2)). Establishment of the Academic Board is also necessary to ensure compliance with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Higher Education Standards Framework.

The Board is responsible for the maintenance of high standards in education and research, and acts to assist the University in ensuring the highest quality of its academic endeavours. Pursuant to the power granted by Section 29 of the Monash University Statute and its responsibility to Council for the maintenance of high standards, Academic Board therefore makes regulations with respect to a range of academic matters.

In addition to performing its critical functions in approving academic programs, the Board is an active contributor to debates regarding academic direction and quality at the University. The Board achieves many of its functions via its committees, which play a critical role prosecuting the academic plans of the University.

Terms of Reference

To discharge the remit conferred on it by Council, Academic Board will:

- Oversee the quality of the university's academic activities wherever and in whatever form they occur. This includes regular analysis of performance indicators and evaluation of programs and initiatives relating to improvement of the university's educational programs and research activities domestically and internationally.
- Monitor the outcomes of the university's education and research activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the approval and review of the development and implementation of courses of study, policies and procedures relating to, or otherwise affecting, education, research and research training.
- Monitor compliance with those of the Higher Education Threshold Standards relevant to its remit and with any other Standards established under the Higher Education Standards Framework or equivalent.
- Consider and make recommendation to Council and/or senior management on issues of academic strategic planning, including endorsement and review of the University's Academic Plan.

Academic Board makes regulations with respect to:

- Requirements for entry to the University and admission to or enrolment in courses or units of study including admission to candidature for a higher degree by research.
- The accreditation or re-accreditation of coursework courses of study, including course requirements, granting of credit towards a course of study, assessment, examination and other academic requirements.
- Exclusion for unsatisfactory progress or inability to progress by students enrolled in coursework courses of study.
- Accreditation and reaccreditation of courses of study for higher degrees by research, including study program, supervision and examination.
- Management of progress by candidates enrolled for higher degrees by research.

Academic Board does not have responsibility for making recommendations on budget or resourcing matters but may, where relevant to the academic affairs of the university, communicate its opinion on such matters to Council or the Vice-Chancellor.

Academic Board:

- Will facilitate provision and dissemination of appropriate information at the appropriate levels to relevant groups of the university community. In doing so, Academic Board will be cognisant of and respond to information from those groups.
- May request and obtain information relevant to the university's academic affairs from any board, committee, faculty or officer of the university.
- May require the monitoring of academic activities within the faculties and the subsequent reporting of outcomes.
- Will report to Council after each meeting and on an annual basis, and will also report on all matters submitted to it by Council for report.

Academic Board may constitute such standing committees as it thinks necessary to:

- Provide appropriate expertise in areas relevant to its deliberations and the discharge of its remit.
- Ensure rigorous assurance of the quality of Monash's academic endeavours.
- Provide for efficient carriage of its business.

Membership

Membership of Academic Board is governed by Council Regulation 12.

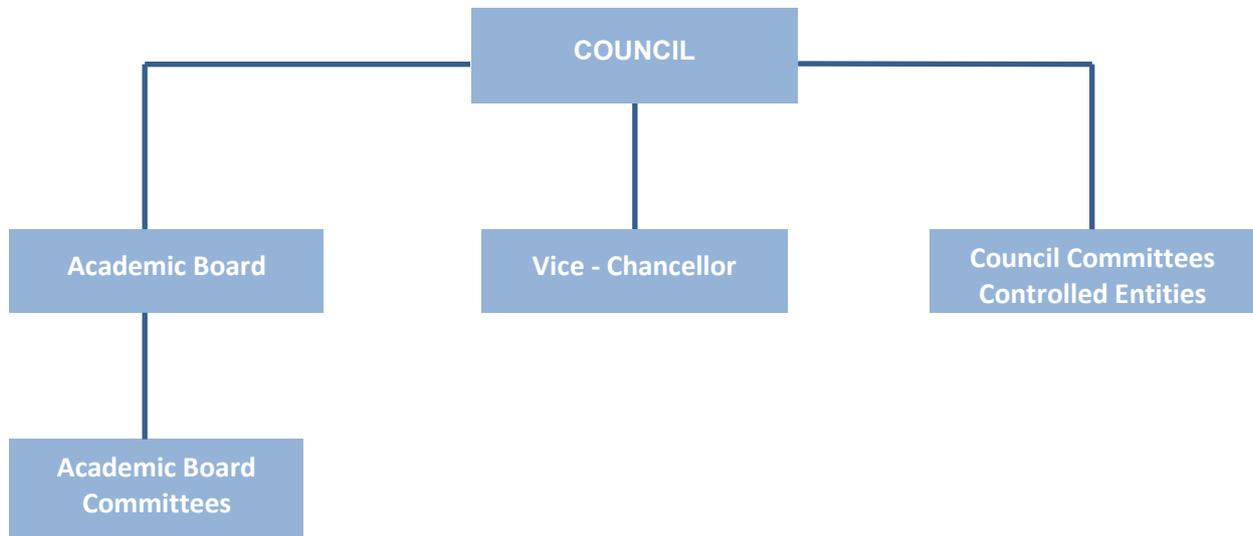
The Board's membership composition – a tripartite structure of approximately equal ratios - recognises that the Board should have the right membership mix to provide for efficient conduct of its business and enable meaningful participation from key stakeholders across the University:

- Ex officio members – the most senior members of the University with direct portfolio responsibilities for academic affairs.
- Heads of Academic Units – senior faculty staff responsible/accountable for overseeing/implementing the University's academic mission within their faculties.
- A cohort of elected members from the broader University community of staff and students, visibly reflecting elements of collegiality and democratic participation in university academic affairs.

Members of Academic Board add significant value by contributing broad experience and perspectives not otherwise available to the Board and:

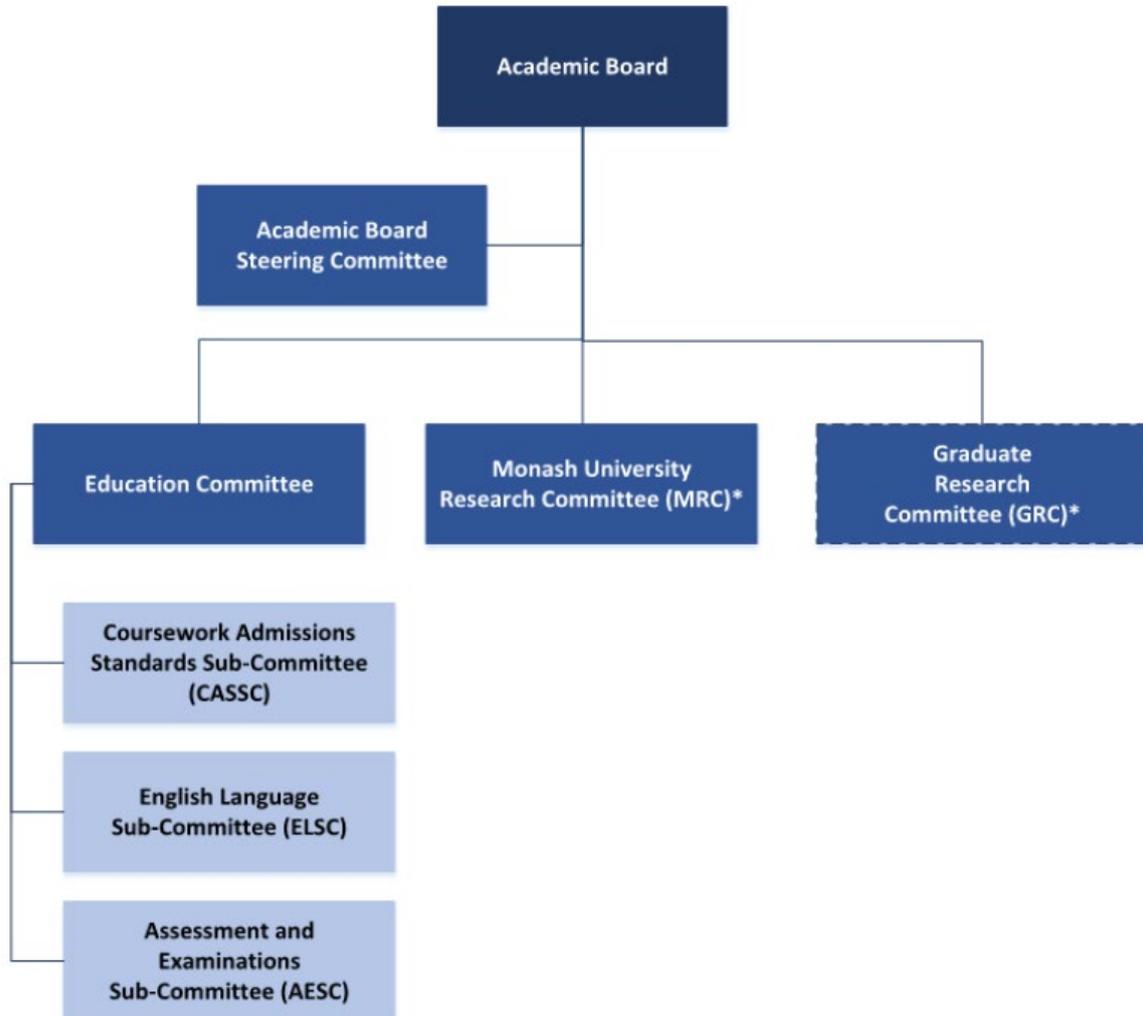
- While various perspectives are important and may be articulated during discussion, ultimately members are expected to act in what they honestly believe to be in the University's best interests.
- Are expected to diligently attend Board meetings or tender their apologies, and familiarise themselves with the agenda and supporting papers before meetings.
- Are obliged to disclose a conflict of interest in matters considered by the Board.
- Are expected to contribute to discussion, observing the Board's rules of debate.
- Will deal with confidential material appropriately and not disclose such information to a third party except where the disclosure is authorised by the Chair/proponent.

Overarching University Committee Structure



The Chair of Academic Board is an ex officio member of University Council and is also a member of the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Committee.

Academic Board Standing Committees



Information on the Board's principal standing committees is available from the Academic Board Committees website:

<http://www.monash.edu/excerv/academic-board/committees-of-ab>

Key Dates for 2022

Academic Board will meet on the following dates (all Wednesday, with the exception of meeting 5) in 2022:

Meeting 1/2021	16 February
Meeting 2/2022	30 March
Meeting 3/2022	4 May
Meeting 4/2022	8 June
Meeting 5/2022	26 July
Meeting 6/2022	7 September
Meeting 7/2022	19 October
Meeting 8/2022	23 November

Academic Board Steering Committee will meet on the following dates (all Tuesdays) in 2022:

Meeting 1/2022	8 February
Meeting 2/2022	22 March
Meeting 3/2022	26 April
Meeting 4/2022	31 May
Meeting 5/2022	19 July
Meeting 6/2022	30 August
Meeting 7/2022	11 October
Meeting 8/2022	15 November

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Contact Information

President (Chair) of Academic Board

Professor Robert Brooks

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Robert.Brooks@monash.edu

Deputy Chairs (Vice-Presidents) of Academic Board

Professor Carla Wilkin

Tel: (03) 9903 1438

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Professor Malin Premaratne

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The Board is supported by the Secretary and staff from Executive Services.

Secretary to Academic Board

Ms Farrah Vintsarevich

Tel: (03) 9905 9008

Email: Farrah.Vintsarevich@monash.edu.au OR academicboard@monash.edu

Academic Board website:

<http://www.monash.edu/execserv/academic-board>

Details of current members of the Board are included in the cover sheet to the agenda for each meeting and are also available from the Board's website.

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Conducting Academic Board Business

Papers for meetings of the Academic Board are distributed electronically (via email) following each meeting of Steering Committee – members can expect to receive their papers approximately one week before each Academic Board meeting.

Members will receive two PDF files – the first contains the agenda *per se* and papers on which the Board is being requested to make a decision, or which canvas key/strategic matters. The second file - or *ePortfolio* - contains supporting program development and review material and reports for noting.

Occasionally it may be necessary to disseminate late material to members immediately prior to a meeting, and this will also normally be done via email.

Academic Board papers will be sent to members at their regular Monash email address. Please advise the Board Secretary (academicBoard@monash.edu) if you have a different preferred email address.

Conducting urgent business

Procedures for approval of urgent items between regular meetings of Academic Board:

1. Criteria for utilising the Procedures

The Steering Committee of Academic Board shall resolve urgent items of business relevant to Academic Board that cannot be managed within the Board's regular schedule of meetings if:

- i. Academic Board approval of the item is required:
 - a. pursuant to Monash legislation or policy; or
 - b. the item is otherwise deemed to be relevant to the remit of Academic Board. In this context, the relevance of an item shall be determined by the President of Academic Board; and
- ii. Approval of the item is required as a matter of urgency and:
 - a. the item cannot be dealt with pursuant to the Academic Board's regular schedule of business; and
 - b. the President of Academic Board determines that it is impracticable for the item to be dealt with by a special meeting of the Board held pursuant to Council Regulation 18(2).

2. Procedures

- i. The President, Academic Board will determine to utilise the process for resolution of urgent items.
- ii. The Academic Board Secretary will circulate the item via email to members of the Steering Committee.
- iii. Within the time frame specified by the Secretary's email (not normally less than two working days from the date of the email), Steering Committee members will signify whether they:
 - a. approve the item;
 - b. do not approve the item; or
 - c. consider that the item should be resolved at a scheduled meeting of the Academic Board or by a special meeting of the Board held pursuant to Council Regulation 18(2).
- iv. Approval of the item requires a 2/3 majority of members (currently in office) of Steering Committee.
- v. Steering Committee resolution of an urgent item pursuant to these Procedures will be included on the agenda for noting at the next regular meeting of the Board.

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Responsibilities of Members

To enable Academic Board to discharge the responsibilities conferred on it by University legislation and its Terms of Reference, members are expected to engage actively with the business of the Board by:

- familiarising themselves with the agenda prior to meetings
- attending meetings
- contributing constructively to discussion at meetings
- suggesting issues that require consideration
- participating as members of Working Parties when required
- participating as members of Standing and other University Committees when required
- where appropriate, by communicating and implementing decisions of the Board

Members of all University Committees are expected to act in the interests of the University as a whole, rather than to promote the interests of a particular person/group. A member will inevitably bring his/her own interests and background to bear on membership, and may take views of a constituency into account, all of which may be articulated during discussion. However, in the final analysis, members are expected to act in what they honestly believe to be in the University's best interests. Under s. 19 of the *Monash University Act*, the University must indemnify members of Academic Board 'in respect of any act or thing done or omitted to be done in good faith in the exercise or purported exercise of any power or duty conferred or imposed by or under this Act.'

If a member has a conflict of interest in relation to a particular item on a meeting agenda, the member must declare that conflict of interest to the President via the Secretary prior to consideration of the relevant item, and must not take part in a vote on any matter concerning it.

Members are expected to deal with confidential material appropriately - confidential information acquired by a member must not be disclosed to a third party except where the disclosure is authorised by the President.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting an apology must be lodged prior to the meeting by email (academicboard@monash.edu). If a member is unable to attend a series of meetings (due to OSP, leave etc), a request for special leave should be made (in advance) to the Secretary (academicboard@monash.edu).

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Introduction

Monash University's Academic Board continued to effectively discharge its statutory responsibility to Council for the maintenance of high standards in education and research. A significant proportion of the Board's activity during 2021 centred on the nimble response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to address effective communication efforts to foster active participation, inclusion and promote a positive educational experience for all students.

The Board's standing committees discharge a range of functions and provide appropriate academic quality assurance. In addition to receiving regular reports and items requiring action from its standing committees, Academic Board approved a range of initiatives and a number of policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which were considered and endorsed by its standing committees, including approval of extending elements of the Academic Safety Net (ASN), including ASN measures for withdrawing fail grades from the academic record and to continue features of supplementary assessment.

The Board continues to value the contribution of its cohort of student members, which forms the basis for much interesting discussion. During 2021, Academic Board accepted a variety of matters submitted by its student members as a result of challenges facing Monash students during COVID-19, including the continuation of the Academic Safety Net in Semesters 1 and 2, 2021.

Academic Standards and Quality

Previous Annual Reports have referred to the range of mechanisms available to the Board to assist its oversight of academic quality at Monash, and the University evaluates the results of the Student Evaluation of Teaching and Units (SETU) in each teaching period to identify and improve unit performance. This process identifies areas of strength and areas needing improvement to ensure the quality of the University's educational offerings.

The University is active in supporting students in the development of their English language skills and is determined to uphold quality consistent with regulatory principles. The Board approved emergency measures for English language entry into Monash Indonesia to be implemented in time for the October 2021 intake.

Academic Program Development and Review

Academic Board continued to focus on a more detailed appreciation of coursework proposals that come to the Board, notably Program Development and Review (Coursework Proposals for Approval), the Extension of Accreditation Period without Review, and amendments to Graduate Research Degrees. The Board also endorsed disestablishment of a small number of courses during the year. As noted in previous reports, the need to consider disestablishment may be prompted by a number of factors, including changes in student demand, as a result of a major course revision, or from a change to strategic positioning. Following completion of the sale of Monash South Africa in April 2019, the Board continued to monitor progress of students during the teach-out period (to be completed by 2022).

Legislation Policy Development and Review

In line with the University's Policy Framework, which sets measurable and aspirational goals of teaching and quality at the University, Academic Board approved a number of policies. A small sample includes:

- Courses and Units Policy
- Student Academic Progress Policy

Academic Board endorsed the Policy on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom and University Student Ombudsman Policy and Procedure.

Academic Board also approved various amendments to the Academic Board Regulations. Some of these include:

- Changes to the principles for establishing equivalence of secondary school qualifications and subjects for the purpose of meeting the Minimum English language proficiency requirements and

approve the tests and test scores that can be used to meet the Minimum English language proficiency requirements.

- In relation to amendment of final results and supplementary assessment due to COVID-19 pandemic and deferred final assessment in units of study.