



Monash University Academic Board Terms of Reference

Date Approved by Council: [13 August 2025]

Preamble

The Academic Board of Monash University has its origins in the Professorial Board of the University established by s26 of the *Monash University Act 1958*. Pursuant to section 20 of the *Monash University Act 2009*, Council established the Academic Board (the Board).

The Academic Board is responsible for the maintenance of high standards in education and research at the University. It both informs the University Council on academic matters and ensures compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (Threshold Standards), particularly in academic governance. It also aligns with other legislative requirements that govern higher education in Australia (especially ESOS, HESA) and in overseas jurisdictions where Monash operates.

These Terms of Reference outline the responsibilities and obligations of Board members under the [Monash University Act 2009 \(the Act\)](#), the [Monash University Statute \(Statute\)](#), the [Monash University \(Council\) Regulations \(Council Regulations\)](#), the [Monash University \(Academic Board\) Regulations](#), and the Threshold Standards. The Terms of Reference also describe the Board's academic governance practices to ensure these duties are fulfilled in accordance with the University's regulatory framework.

Under the Regulations, the Council has assigned to the Board a range of powers and functions (Reg.10(2)).

The Board performs many of its functions via its standing committees, which play a critical role in fulfilling the academic plans of the University.

Pursuant to the power granted by s 29 of the Statute, the Board makes regulations with respect to a range of academic matters - the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations.

In addition to its formal functions, the Board is an active contributor to debates regarding academic direction and quality at the University.

The Academic Board does not have responsibility for the distribution of resources or for determining the academic profile of the institution.

Consistent with the Council Regulations, the Chair of the Academic Board is referred to as the President throughout the Terms of Reference (Reg. 13).



Topic	Relevant Council Regulations
1. Functions and Powers of Academic Board	
<p>The Board's functions and powers are defined by the Council Regulations and also reflect the requirements of the Threshold Standards. The primary role of the Board is to maintain high standards in education and research. More specifically, the Board is responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reporting to the Council on academic quality, integrity, performance, compliance, risks, and reviews to ensure continuous monitoring and improvement in alignment with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) and the Monash regulatory framework.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The Board will report to Council after each meeting and provide an annual report summarising its activities.b. Such reporting includes any matter referred to the Board by the Council for report, after having informed the Vice-Chancellor of the proposed report.2. Approving, monitoring and reviewing academic policies and their effectiveness.3. Determining admission standards (including questions of admissions equivalence) and ensuring that academic requirements for course and unit entry, assessment and completion align with national and international benchmarks.4. Considering and responding to any report on an academic matter raised by the head of an academic unit or other University body.5. Approving and accrediting (or reaccrediting) courses, and reviewing them to ensure quality and relevance.6. Ensuring delegated academic governance processes are implemented and operate effectively according to the Monash Policy Framework, including those processes that govern the approval and accreditation (or reaccreditation) of units and courses.7. Ensuring academic oversight of quality standards is effectively secured through:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. monitoring education and research quality and integrity, and initiating improvement against institutional academic quality benchmarks. (This includes monitoring student evaluations of teaching and learning and student complaints and academic conduct);b. monitoring and mitigation of potential risks to education and research quality and integrity; andc. regular evaluation of the processes for effective institutional monitoring, review, and improvement to enhance education and research activities. <p>In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Board:has the powers contained in Regulation 10(1)(b) and (f) of the Council Regulations and</p>	<p>Reg.10</p>



- may request and obtain information relevant to the University's academic matters from any board, committee, faculty or officer of the University; and
- may require the monitoring of education and research matters within faculties and the subsequent reporting of outcomes.

Additional functions, powers, or duties may be conferred by any University statute, regulation, or Council resolution.

2. Discharge of Responsibilities

In practice, Academic Board predominantly carries out its responsibilities by:

- a. Overseeing the quality and outcomes of the University's academic matters wherever and in whatever form they occur. This work includes:
 - accreditation and re-accreditation of courses of study;
 - approval of policies and consideration of procedures relating to education or research;
 - review of courses of study, and policies and procedures relating to education or research;
 - regular analysis of performance indicators and evaluation of programs and initiatives relating to improvement of the University's education and research;
 - considering risks to the integrity or quality of the University's education or research for the purpose of enhancing relevant policies and procedures;
- b. Monitoring compliance with those of the Higher Education Threshold Standards relevant to its remit; and
- c. Considering and making recommendations to senior management or Council on issues of academic strategic planning, including considering academic risks as they relate to strategic objectives.

[Reg.10](#)



3. Membership	
<p>Membership of the Board is governed by the Council Regulations.</p> <p>The membership of Academic Board reflects the global campus network of Monash University with the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for Monash's campus or presence in each of Malaysia, Suzhou and Indonesia as <i>ex officio</i> members.</p> <p>The term of office of Board members is set out in the Council Regulations.</p> <p>The Board's membership composition – a tripartite structure of approximately equal parts – recognises that the Board should have the right membership mix to provide for the effective and efficient performance of its functions and enable meaningful participation from stakeholders across the University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ex officio members</i>: the most senior members of the University with direct portfolio responsibilities for academic matters;• <i>Heads of Academic Units</i>: senior faculty staff responsible or accountable for overseeing or implementing the University's academic mission within their faculties; and• A cohort of <i>elected members</i> from the broader University community of staff and students, reflecting elements of collegiality and democratic participation in the University's academic matters. <p>There is no provision for appointing an alternate for a Board member.</p>	<p>Reg.12</p> <p>Reg.16</p>
4. President, Vice-Presidents and Elected Members	
<p>The Council Regulations outline the appointment procedures for the President, Vice-President/s, and elected members of the Board.</p> <p>The President chairs the Board, promoting its role in maintaining high standards in education and research, and serves as an <i>ex officio</i> member of all committees established by the Board, as well as the University Council, the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Committee, and the Senior Management Forum. The President represents the Board on University committees and fosters relationships with the presidents of academic boards (or equivalent) at partner institutions and those across the sector. Additionally, the President ensures strong collaboration with senior University leaders responsible for education and research, and is actively involved in staff selection and academic promotions.</p> <p>The Board must elect a Vice-President and may elect two Vice-Presidents. The Vice-President/s supports the President in a range of activities, including those delegated by the President. When the President is unable to preside at a meeting, a Vice-President presides.</p>	<p>Reg.13-15</p>



5. Obligations and Duties of Members	
<p>To enable the Board to discharge the responsibilities conferred on it by University legislation, members are expected to engage actively with the business of the Board by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• familiarising themselves with the agenda and supporting papers prior to meetings;• diligently 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 Board committees when required; and• where appropriate, communicating and implementing decisions of the Board. <p>Members are expected to act in the interests of the University as a whole, rather than to promote the interests of a particular person or group. A member will inevitably bring their own interests and background to bear on membership, and may take the views of a constituency into account, all of which may be articulated during discussion. However, members are expected to act in what they honestly believe to be in the University's best interests. Under s.19 of the <i>Monash University Act</i>, 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.'</p>	Reg.10 and 12
6. Conflict of Interest	
<p>The Monash University (Council) Regulations require that a member of the Board who has a pecuniary interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the Board must, as soon as practicable after the relevant facts have come to that member's knowledge, declare the nature of the interest at a meeting of the Board or in writing to the President.</p> <p>Further, a member who has a material personal interest of any other kind in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the Board must, as soon as practicable after the relevant facts have come to that member's knowledge, declare that interest to the President via the Secretary prior to consideration of the item.</p> <p>Where a declaration of a pecuniary or other material personal interest is made, unless the Board otherwise directs, the member must not be present during any deliberation with respect to the matter, the member is not entitled to vote on the matter, and if the member does vote on the matter, their vote must be disallowed.</p>	Reg.20



7. Confidentiality	
<p>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 or is required by law.</p> <p>Agenda items may be designated by a confidentiality indicator. Items and included papers should be discussed and circulated strictly as indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IC – In camera, for Members and observers only.• M – Monash, for Monash staff and students only.• O – Open, available to anyone.	<p>Reg.21</p>
8. Committees	
<p>The Board's powers with respect to Committees and delegation are set out in the Council Regulations.</p> <p>The Board may constitute and appoint such committees as it thinks fit. Committees are designed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Provide appropriate expertise in areas relevant to the Board's deliberations and the discharge of its remit;b. Ensure rigorous assurance of the quality of Monash's academic endeavours;c. Provide for effective and efficient carriage of its business; andd. Monitor compliance with policies and procedures governing education or research that are designed to facilitate compliance with laws and regulations, and mitigate academic risk. <p>The Board may delegate specific responsibilities to committees, provided that such delegations are consistent with the Council and Academic Board Regulations, and the Board's overarching governance framework. However, all delegated functions, powers or duties remain subject to the Board's ultimate authority, and committees must operate within the scope of their designated authority, regularly reporting back to the Board for review and oversight.</p> <p>The current standing committees of Academic Board (and the terms of reference for each committee) are located at: Academic Board Committees.</p>	<p>Reg.11 and 21</p>
9. Holding of Meetings and Agendas	
<p>The Council Regulations set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the minimum number of meetings annually (four);• the procedure for calling a special meeting;• the notice requirement for meetings; and• the procedure for holding a meeting by electronic means.	<p>Reg.18 and 21</p>



In addition, the following established custom and practice apply to the agendas for Board meetings:

- a. The President is responsible for establishing the agenda for Academic Board meetings.
- b. This includes establishing an annual schedule of business that requires the regular attention of the Board and Council.

The following items are considered annually:

- Honorary Degrees Committee recommendations;
- Academic Reviews Annual Report;
- Student Evaluation of Teaching and Units (SETU) Reports;
- Annual report on student grievances and student conduct matters;
- Student Experience Survey (SES);
- Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS); and
- Election results for student and staff positions on Academic Board.

The following items are considered more regularly:

- Regulations and policies;
 - Coursework program development and review (undergraduate and postgraduate);
 - Graduate research program development and review;
 - Reports from standing committees;
 - Assessment of academic risk and mitigation strategies; and
 - Academic Board Student Member reports.
- c. Should a matter arise between preparation of the agenda and the meeting date, the matter may be presented to the Board at the President's discretion.
 - d. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring the preparation and dissemination of the agenda.

Any proposed notice of motion, report, or other business must be submitted in writing to the Secretary no less than ten (10) calendar days prior to the meeting. Matters submitted after this time may be accepted at the President's discretion.

With the approval of the President, the Secretary will disseminate the agenda, including the minutes of the previous meeting, for a meeting of the Board at least seven (7) days prior to the next meeting of the Board.

The Board may, by majority vote, permit the introduction of any subject for discussion.



10. Quorum	
<p>A quorum at a meeting of the Board is one-third of the members at that time, excluding any member who is on leave of absence granted by the Board.</p> <p>If no quorum is present, the President may determine that an informal meeting should proceed, with the endorsement of the members who are present. Items of business can be discussed but no formal decisions can be made and the inquorate session should be recorded as notes.</p> <p>Items of business discussed at an inquorate session may be sent to members of the Steering Committee for approval.</p>	Reg.21
11. Voting	
<p>All recommendations and/or questions, which come before any meeting of the Board, must be decided by a majority of the members present (subject to any resolution of the Council).</p> <p>The person presiding at a meeting of the Board has a vote and, in the event of the votes on any recommendation/question being equal, has a casting vote.</p> <p>Voting at a meeting is either by a show of hands and/or by electronic voting.</p>	Reg.21
12. Attendees and Observers at Meetings	
<p>To assist the Board with its deliberations, the President will annually nominate persons to be regular attendees at ordinary Board meetings. Additionally, the President may invite other persons to attend for a particular meeting or item to ensure appropriate advice is received.</p> <p>In keeping with the University's commitment to transparent governance, the President may invite a staff member, student, or other individual associated with the University to attend a Board meeting or part thereof as an observer, when relevant to a specific agenda item.</p> <p>A request to attend as an observer must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Board at least three (3) business days before the meeting. Attendance as an observer is subject to the President's approval and limited to 10 observers per meeting. Observers will receive an agenda excluding confidential items.</p> <p>Observers of Board meetings must adhere to the following rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observers attending in person must identify themselves to the Secretary of the Board upon arrival. Observers attending remotely must join using their full name to facilitate identification;• Observers will be admitted after confidential items have been considered;• If the Board moves to discuss any item in a closed session, observers will be required to step out until those discussions are finished;• With the President's permission, observers may speak or respond to questions;• Observers do not have voting rights; and• The President reserves the right to ask any observer to leave without notice.	Reg.21



13. Questions on Notice	
<p>Members should provide questions on items not on the agenda at least 24 hours prior to a meeting. At the President's discretion, a question may be disallowed if it falls outside the functions of the Board and/or is more appropriately referred to the appropriate University committee or officer. Any questions that are not disallowed will be discussed by members during the meeting.</p>	Reg.21
14. Motions	
<p>A motion proposes a specific action to be taken or decision made by the Board.</p> <p>The presiding officer may propose a motion that may be discussed and voted upon.</p> <p>If a motion is proposed by another member, it must be seconded (i.e., supported by another member), and discussed. Any proposed amendment requires a seconder before being voted upon. Any motion that is proposed and seconded (or an amended motion incorporating an amendment that has been seconded and supported by a majority vote) should then be voted on by Board members. If the motion receives a majority vote, it is carried or approved; if not, it is defeated or rejected. If a motion or an amendment to a motion is not seconded, it must lapse.</p> <p>A motion or amendment moved by the presiding officer shall not require a seconder.</p>	Reg.21
15. Minutes and Reports	
<p>The Secretary is responsible for ensuring the preparation and dissemination of the minutes of the Board.</p> <p>The minutes shall record:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">The nature of the meeting, whether ordinary or special;The date, time and place of the meeting;The names of the President (or in the President's absence, the presiding officer) and attendees of the meeting;The names of those members from whom apologies have been received;A summary of the business conducted at the meeting including particulars of all motions that are carried; andThe results of any vote taken by the Board. <p>The minutes of a meeting will be considered for approval, with any amendments as accepted by majority vote, at the following meeting.</p> <p>The Secretary will assist the President in the preparation of a report to Council after each meeting and with its annual report to Council.</p>	Reg.18 and 21



16. Special Rules	
When acting within the terms of reference, the Board may establish special rules for its proceedings, which shall be reported to Council.	Reg.16
17. Review	
<p>The Board shall review the Terms of Reference annually and submit any proposed changes to Council for approval.</p> <p>The Board shall conduct a self-assessment of its activities under these Terms of Reference biennially, and report any conclusions and recommendations to Council.</p> <p>The Board shall be subject to an independent external review of the effectiveness of its academic governance processes and procedures at least every seven years and ensure that the findings of this review are considered by a competent officer and that agreed actions are implemented and reported to Council.</p>	Reg.10