

Interim Constitution of the Academic Senate Rule

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

- (1) This Rule is known as the Interim Constitution of the Academic Senate.
- (2) The Academic Senate is established by section 15 of the [University of Newcastle Act 1989](#) (NSW), which provides that "There shall be an Academic Senate of the University".
- (3) This Constitution is made by the Council as a rule in accordance with Section 29 of the [University of Newcastle Act 1989](#) and details specific functions and responsibilities of the Academic Senate and its committees.

Interpretation

- (4) In this Constitution:
 - a. headings are for convenience only and do not affect meaning; and
 - b. unless the contrary intention appears:
 - i. words importing the singular number include the plural number and vice versa;
 - ii. words importing any gender include all other genders; and
 - iii. a reference to a Clause is to a clause of this Constitution.

Definitions

- (5) In the context of this Constitution:
 - a. academic staff means an academic employee holding a substantive academic position of 0.5 full time equivalent or above where the contract length is twelve months or longer;
 - b. Act means the [University of Newcastle Act 1989 \(NSW\)](#);
 - c. award refers to the particular academic achievement – certificate, diploma, degree following the successful completion of the requirements of an underlying program;
 - d. By-Law means the [University of Newcastle By-law 2017 \(NSW\)](#);
 - e. Council means the Council of the University;
 - f. enrolled student means a student enrolled in a course at the University of Newcastle at the time of their election and during their term of office;
 - g. postgraduate coursework student means a student enrolled in a postgraduate coursework program of the University;
 - h. professoriate means academic staff appointed to Level D or E positions in the University;
 - i. program means the program of study created and approved by Academic Senate leading to an established award;

- j. research higher degree student means student enrolled in a postgraduate research higher degree program of the University;
- k. Schedule means the Schedule to this Rule, which forms part of the Rule;
- l. undergraduate student means a student enrolled in an undergraduate program of the University;
- m. University means the University of Newcastle, established by the Act.

Section 2 - Act and By-law

(6) Section 15(1) of the Act provides that the Academic Senate is to consist of "the Vice-Chancellor and such other persons as the Council may, in accordance with the by-laws, determine".

Section 3 - President of the Academic Senate

(7) The functions of the President are to:

- a. chair meetings of the Academic Senate;
- b. approve agendas for and minutes of the Academic Senate meetings;
- c. provide leadership in the development of academic policy through the Academic Senate and its committees;
- d. represent the Academic Senate on University bodies;
- e. be an official member of the University Council as provided for in the Act; and
- f. undertake such other functions as the Academic Senate may determine by resolution from time to time.

Section 4 - Deputy Presidents of the Academic Senate

Functions of the Deputy Presidents:

(8) The Deputy responsible for teaching and learning will be the deputy chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for teaching and learning to be the chair.

(9) The Deputy responsible for research will be the deputy chair of the Research Committee, with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for research to be the chair.

(10) The role of the Deputy President in relation to each of the committees in Clauses 8 and 9 above is to include setting the committee meeting agendas with the chair.

(11) The role of each Deputy President will principally be focused on issues and development of policy within the ambit of the Academic Senate, lead major projects of the Academic Senate and engage with the respective Assistant Deans.

(12) During any absence of the President, the President will appoint one Deputy President to act as President who will have all of the functions of the President.

(13) In the event that the President is unable to appoint one Deputy President, the Returning Officer will appoint one Deputy President, by lot, to act as President with all the functions of the President.

Section 5 - Detailed Interim Functions of the Academic Senate

(14) The Academic Senate functions reflect Clause 18 of the [University of Newcastle By-law 2017](#), the [Governance Rule](#), references the Interim Constitution of the Academic Senate Rule and sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 of The Higher Education Standards Framework 2015 (HESF).

| Item No. | Academic Senate Assurance Summary | Scope |
|----------|--|--|
| (a) | Is the principal advisory committee to the Council and Vice-Chancellor providing academic (education and research) leadership advice, reporting and compliance assurance on academic governance and standards. | Advice to Council and/or Vice-Chancellor and academic compliance reporting. |
| (b) | Provides appropriate academic and research input to the University's strategic plan. | Strategic Planning. |
| (c) | Acts as(i) the principal academic forum for discussion and deliberation of academic and research matters through informed and open discussion and (ii) critically evaluates the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations (based on HESF). | Discussion, debate and evaluation of educational innovations. |
| (d) | Jointly manages effective and targeted two-way communication between the Academic Senate, Council, senior executive, committees and the wider University community on academic and research activities and relevant academic standards across the University. | Two-way communication exchange between the Academic Senate and schools, Faculty Board, boards. Academic issues for referral/action |
| (e) | Considers any relevant teaching, scholarship, research and research training proposal made by any faculty, school, or board, at or in connection with the University, including providing general advice on academic priorities. | Proposals from schools, Faculty Boards, boards and academic priorities. |
| (f) | Ensures effective quality assurance of new program design and consistency of processes, to approve proposed new programs/awards that meet self-accreditation requirements. | Quality assurance. New programs/awards. |
| (g) | Ensures that existing and established programs are monitored, reviewed and updated for continuous improvement and to align to the review cycle, utilising internal and external advice/input where appropriate. | Quality assurance. Established programs/awards. |
| (h) | Approves, monitors and reviews the development of academic and research rules, policies and other high-level procedural documentation as appropriate, and oversees their effectiveness and implementation. | Reviews rules, policies and relevant procedural documentation. |
| (i) | Maintains oversight of academic and research integrity including monitoring for potential risks. | Risk management/assurance. |
| (j) | Reviews required performance reports and survey outcomes in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the University's academic and research monitoring and review systems, including conducting internal and external institutional benchmarking to support best practice. | Evaluates monitoring and review systems and conducts institutional benchmarking. |
| (k) | Maintains standing orders for the Academic Senate and its committees. | Maintains standing orders. |
| (l) | Determines the structure and functions of its committees. | Manages committee structure and remit. |
| (m) | Monitors, reviews and recommends updates to the Delegation of Academic Matters to align with the academic and research policy framework and ensure effective and consistent implementation across the University. | Aligns Academic Senate delegations to policy framework. |

| Item No. | Academic Senate Assurance Summary | Scope |
|----------|---|---|
| (n) | Conducts regular self-evaluation (reviews) of the effectiveness of academic governance and monitoring systems. | Self-evaluation of governance and monitoring systems. |
| (o) | Exercises the authority delegated to the Academic Senate by the Council under Schedule 1 of the Governance Rule . | Exercises delegated authority. |

Section 6 - Committees of the Academic Senate

(15) The Academic Senate will have the following committees:

- a. Academic Senate Executive;
- b. Teaching and Learning Committee;
- c. Research Committee;
- d. Program and Course Approval Committee;
- e. Faculty Boards; and
- f. such other committees as the Academic Senate by resolution determines.

(16) The Academic Senate will develop and approve the membership and terms of reference for each of its committees and such other matters as the Academic Senate by resolution determines.

(17) The Vice-Chancellor and the President of Academic Senate are, by virtue of office, members of all Academic Senate committees.

(18) The term of office for all elected Academic Senate representatives on Academic Senate Committees will be for the period of their Academic Senate term of office, unless otherwise stated.

Section 7 - Approval and Variation of the Constitution of the Academic Senate

(19) This Constitution:

- a. must be approved by resolution of the Council and takes effect from the date specified by resolution of the Council;
- b. may only be varied or rescinded by resolution of the Council.

Status and Details

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| Status | Historic |
| Effective Date | 29th January 2019 |
| Review Date | 29th January 2021 |
| Approval Authority | University Council |
| Approval Date | 21st November 2018 |
| Expiry Date | 8th April 2022 |
| Responsible Executive | Dianne Allen University Secretary dianne.allen@newcastle.edu.au |
| Enquiries Contact | Zoe Ward Council Secretariat Officer zoe.ward@newcastle.edu.au <hr/> Governance and Assurance Services |

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Academic Senate" - The Academic Senate of the University as described in the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.