Council Members Professional Development Program Guideline

Section 1 - 1. Context

(1) It is the University of Newcastle Council's policy to support the professional development of Council members consistent with their duties and responsibilities as set out in the University of Newcastle Act 1989 No 68 (the Act) and the Council Charter.

(2) This guideline has been developed in line with the requirement of Section 16(1B) of the Act and Protocol 5 of the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities to provide guidance on the operation of the program.

Section 2 - Guidelines

Approach

(3) The professional development program for members of the University Council has the following broad aims:

a. to provide individual members of Council with the appropriate skills and knowledge to operate effectively within the University governance system;
b. to build upon the collective skills and experience of Council in order to enhance its general performance; and
c. to encourage Council to evaluate the professional development needs of its members, both on an individual and a collective basis.

(4) In order to fulfil these aims, the University of Newcastle Professional Development Program for Council members includes:

a. induction activities on commencement;
b. opportunities for knowledge, acquisition and reflection in respect to the University's business and initiatives, including participating in in-house activities;
c. opportunities to gain understanding of national and international developments in the tertiary education sector and associated government and community developments;
d. opportunities to participate in external conferences and activities, to broaden skills and knowledge about governance, its principles and processes; and
e. Council members' self-evaluation of their performance, and identification of their professional development needs.

Induction

(5) All Council members will take part in an induction program at the commencement of their term of office. The induction process comprises a continuous "journey of learning" for new Council members.

Welcome Letter from the Chancellor

(6) New members of Council receive a welcome letter from the Chancellor setting out terms of appointment.

Information Pack

(7) An information pack is prepared to support new Council members ahead of their first meeting, including:

a. overview presentation of the University for Council members;
b. map of the University;
c. a list of all members of Council and Council members' contact details for Council members;
d. the University's strategic plan;
e. access to the agenda papers and minutes for the previous meeting of Council;
f. Council meeting dates;
g. Council Charter and Council member handbook;
h. Councillor Protection Deed;
i. Council Member Remuneration and Schedule of Benefits; and
j. a parking permit (external Council members only).

Induction Briefings

(8) The University Secretary will facilitate the schedule and induction program addressing the following key matters:

a. discussion with the Chancellor about the role and function of Council; roles and responsibilities of individual members on Council and Council member code of conduct; and consideration for allocation of a mentor to assist new members of Council in their ongoing Council activities;
b. presentation from the Vice-Chancellor about the University - organisation, location and size, strategic plan, financial performance, current issues, major projects, and the University's place in the higher education sector;
c. introduction to the University's financial status, understanding the University financial accounts, and governance, legal and compliance briefings;
d. briefing from the University Secretary outlining:
    i. the primary responsibilities of a Council member and the duties as prescribed in legislation;
    ii. familiarisation with, and explanation of, the Council Charter and Handbook;
    iii. familiarisation with, and explanation of, Council membership, structure and meeting procedures;
    iv. access to resource materials including Council rules, policies, principal dates, matters on which authority is retained by Council and relevant reports and publications;
    v. advice on how to access further information;
    vi. the role of the University Secretary.

Building Links with the University Executive

(9) The University Secretary will coordinate meet and greet sessions with University Senior Executives to support an understanding of their roles and strategic focus.

Mentors

(10) The Chancellor will assign a mentor (from amongst the experienced members of Council) to each new member of Council as appropriate. The mentor will be available to provide informal advice and support.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Policy Library for the latest version.

Committee Inductions

(11) Discussions will be coordinated with the Chairs (or their nominees) of the Committees of Council and President of Academic Senate about the roles and functions of those committees.

Professional Development

(12) Professional development relating to the University of Newcastle and the higher education sector will be arranged for Council members as appropriate. Council members will receive periodic briefings on major developments/issues within the University at Council meetings.

(13) The Vice-Chancellor (via the Report of the Vice-Chancellor) will periodically report on performance against strategy, and initiatives and developments stemming from attendance at and participation in various external meetings.

(14) Invitations will be issued to Council members to attend University functions which will facilitate interaction with staff and students and broaden their knowledge about the University core business.

(15) Members of Council will be provided with periodic media news clipping reports and media summaries about the University and/or broader tertiary education developments.

(16) Members of Council will be expected to apply their individual knowledge, skills and experience by providing advice about and input into specialised University activities or initiatives.

(17) Site visits and safety inspections will be organised for Council members to enhance understanding of the University's operations.

General Professional Development in Governance

(18) The University Secretary will arrange briefings for Council members on their rights and responsibilities as members of the governing body and provide updates on University governance.

Council Committees

(19) All members of Council will be expected to participate actively in Council committees.

(20) Members of Council appointed as a member of a committee of Council will generally be inducted into the Committee and briefed on its recent activities and business by the Committee Chair and/or the University Secretary or appropriate nominee(s) prior to attending the first meeting.

External Professional Development

(21) The University will fully fund professional development programs for Council members, providing it is assessed to be warranted and budgeted. The University Council supports credentialing in AICD Governance Foundations and Company Directors Courses.

(22) Members are particularly required to develop a complete understanding of the following matters:

a. understanding Financial Reports;
b. understanding Audit Reports; and
c. risk management and understanding risk management reports.

(23) Information about major forthcoming professional development activities relevant to members of Council will generally be advised prior to the start of each calendar year (and throughout the year as information becomes

known), to facilitate planning by Council members.

(24) Members of Council may make an application for support of attendance at relevant professional development activities at any time throughout the year.

(25) Applications for support to attend relevant professional development activities (particularly external conferences and seminars) should be made to the University Secretary for timely action.

(26) The Chancellor will determine each application in consultation with the University Secretary and will be based on:

a. the appropriateness of the activity given the level of experience and expertise of the member;
b. the appropriateness of the activity given the role served on Council by the member;
c. the previous professional development activities of the member that have been supported by the Council;
d. the magnitude of the support sought; and
e. the relevance of the professional development activity to Council's general objectives and to the benefit of the University.

(27) The Council's professional development funds will be managed within the limits of the financial allocation provided for Council expenses and remuneration, negotiated annually by the University Secretary, as part of the University budget planning process.

(28) An annual report on professional development expenditure, and associated claims for reimbursement will be provided to Council in line with the Reimbursement of Council Members' Expenses Policy.

Evaluation Activities

(29) Each member of Council is encouraged to informally discuss with the Chancellor his/her role within Council with a view to reflecting upon:

a. individual performance, and any individual professional development needs; and
b. committee membership and long-term succession planning.

(30) Performance assessment and feedback of the Council and its individual members will be undertaken periodically.

(31) Members of Council will be asked to reflect and recommend any changes to be implemented for the following year.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	8th January 2020
Review Date	8th January 2022
Approval Authority	University Secretary
Approval Date	18th December 2019
Expiry Date	30th March 2023
Responsible Executive	Hamish Lithgow University Secretary
Enquiries Contact	Hamish Lithgow University Secretary Legal and Governance Services

Glossary Terms and Definitions

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

"Council" - The governing authority of the University established under section 8A of 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.

"Council member" - A person who is a member of the University Council as described in Section 8B of the University of Newcastle Act, 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Risk management" - The co-ordinated activities of assessing, controlling, monitoring, and reviewing risk in the pursuit of the University's objectives.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Policy Library for the latest version.