

Academic Governance Policy

Version number	2
Approved by	Academic Board
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Purpose

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SI) is dedicated to maintaining academic freedom, and the highest academic standards and integrity through robust academic governance processes. Academic governance at SI is transparent and accountable for all academic matters, remaining distinct from corporate governance.

The *Academic Standards Policy* clearly outlines the principles and procedures that guide academic governance activities at SI. It establishes the structure of academic governance from the Academic Board through to the academic management committees and senior academic staff. It is designed to be read alongside the *Terms of Reference for the Academic Board*, and any sub-committees that report to the *Academic Board*.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members involved in academic governance activities at SI.

Principles

Academic governance is the framework of management that enables SI to set and maintain academic standards and benchmarks within SI. It is integral to the success of SI's higher education operations.

SI is committed to ensuring compliance with all relevant regulatory and legal requirements, in particular the *Higher Education Standards Framework* (as amended).

It is important for academic governance to be transparent, objective, and accountable. Thus, academic governance has authority separate from corporate governance.

In order to establish this separation, the *Academic Board* and *Corporate Governance Board* have been established with separate decision-making powers. While the *Academic Board* advises the *Corporate Governance Board* as appropriate, the *Corporate Governance Board* shall not override decisions made by the *Academic Board* regarding academic matters within its remit.

Procedures

Establishing a framework for academic governance

The Corporate Governance Board

The *Corporate Governance Board* is given responsibility for oversight over higher education and is accountable for ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks, that quality of education delivered is assured, that risks to higher education are mitigated, and the operation remains financially able to carry out its academic and regulatory obligations. It is essential that SI maintains separation and appropriate cooperation between corporate and academic matters. Hence, the *Corporate Governance Board* works with the *Academic Board* on appropriate matters such as:

- Ensuring that long-term academic goals align with the SI mission and goals
- Ensuring that SI has the infrastructure and resources to provide existing programs
- Approving staff time to undertake full program proposals for the *Academic Board* to consider
- Reviewing reports submitted by the *Academic Board* to maintain adequate oversight of risks and ensure strategic planning is informed
- Workforce planning.

For more information regarding the *Corporate Governance Board*, please refer to the *SI Corporate Governance Board Terms of Reference* and the *Corporate Governance Policy*.

The Academic Board

The *Academic Board* is the highest authority on all academic matters, as delegated by the *Corporate Governance Board*. It is responsible for setting academic standards and ensuring the highest quality of learning and teaching at SI.

The *Academic Board* must be established under a Terms of Reference that is reviewed and approved by the *Corporate Governance Board* at least every three years.

The *Academic Board* must, at all times, keep true and accurate records of its activities and decisions.

SI will ensure that membership of the *Academic Board* is at all times compliant with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks. The *Academic Board* will include experienced internal academic staff, external academic expertise, and student representation (one from the general student body and, where possible, one representing the ATSIC student body). SI acknowledges its responsibilities under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* and thus strives to promote a gender balance on all boards and committees.

The roles and responsibilities of the *Academic Board* include, but are not limited to:

- Managing the design, delivery, and review of all higher education programs taught at SI

- Ensuring academic operations are carried out in compliance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements
- Approving and reviewing all of SI's policies related to academic governance
- Setting and approving internal benchmarks for academic quality
- Managing rules and procedures surrounding student academic conduct, and corresponding misconduct
- Upholding the highest academic standards across SI
- Ensuring that benchmarks for the quality and outcomes of each higher education program at SI are established on advice from academic management committees
- Ensuring robust risk management across SI's academic operations
- Ensuring that all delegations of academic authority are implemented effectively.

For more information on the *Academic Board's* responsibilities, including meeting procedures, Board membership, and key procedures and functions carried out by the Board, please refer to the *SI Academic Board Terms of Reference*.

Student representative

SI is committed to maintaining student representation in decision-making by establishing a student representative as a member of the *Academic Board*. This representative should be nominated by the students on an annual basis. There may be a substitution if the nominated representative is unable to fulfil their duties, or there is significant dissatisfaction from the student body.

The student representative must create a channel for listening to student complaints, potential issues and suggestions. The student representative then has an obligation to raise these issues with the *Academic Board*.

The *Academic Board* is obligated to listen to the students' interests raised by the student representative in good faith. To this end, student concerns are a standing item of the *Academic Board* agenda.

Senior academic staff

The Dean is responsible for overseeing the delivery and support of all higher education programs at SI, along with expectations of scholarship for academic staff. The Dean as a member of senior management oversees academic staff management and course compliance to standards, and acts as a conduit between the *Corporate Governance Board*, *Academic Board* and senior management. The Dean chairs the *Learning and Teaching Committee* and is the senior academic leader internal to SI.

Reporting to the Dean, Program Directors have leadership responsibilities over a specific higher education program, which may include teaching into that program and responsibilities for developing curriculum, designing, conducting, and moderating assessment. Program Directors are responsible for conducting reviews and evaluation cycles, and reporting outcomes to the *Academic Board* and its subcommittees. Program Directors also supervise junior academic staff delivering the program.

Academic management committees

The Learning and Teaching Committee:

The *Academic Board* will establish a *Learning and Teaching Committee* which is broadly responsible for:

- Academic standards
- Support of learning and teaching
- Program review
- Policy Implementation
- Learning and Teaching Plan
- Specific responsible are detailed in the *Learning and Teaching Committee Terms of Reference*.

Program Advisory Committee:

The *Academic Board* will establish a *Program Advisory Committee* which is broadly responsible for:

- Curriculum review
- Interim review and re-approval
- External curriculum advice
- Policy and planning advice
- Specific responsible are detailed in the *Program Advisory Committee Terms of Reference*.

Program Monitoring Committee:

The *Academic Board* will establish a *Program Monitoring Committee* which is broadly responsible for:

- Compiling performance metrics
- Benchmarking
- Advice on promotions
- Decisions on student grievance/student appeal cases
- Specific responsible are detailed in the *Program Monitoring Committee Terms of Reference*.

Strategic planning for academic matters

The Learning and Teaching Plan

The *Academic Board*, taking advice from the *Learning and Teaching Committee*, must review, develop, and approve the *Learning and Teaching Plan*. It must then observe the five-year review cycle to ensure the Plan remains actionable.

The Workforce Plan

The *Academic Board* must work in conjunction with the *Corporate Governance Board* to develop the *Workforce Plan*. It must provide advice on the staffing needs of SI's higher education program delivery for the five-year period.

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, the *Academic Board* must ensure that its delegations are implemented effectively. Committees and staff members under delegated authority by the *Academic Board* must compile periodic reports on their activities for review by the *Academic Board*, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*.

To ensure proper ongoing monitoring of key matters, the following are standing items of the *Academic Board* agenda:

- Student representative contribution
- ATSI representation and facilitation
- Review of student grievances, complaints, and appeals
- Student admissions matters
- Program delivery
- Learning and teaching resources and facilities
- Policy matters
- Risks to academic standards and integrity
- Benchmarking and progress and success measured against benchmarks
- Structure and content of learning and assessment.

Following the review of all reports and advice from committees and senior academic staff, the *Academic Board* will provide an annual report to the *Corporate Governance Board*.

In addition, SI will engage an independent Auditor at least every five years to undertake an independent review of the effectiveness of academic governance at SI. This review will take into account records kept by the *Academic Board* in the period of review.

Definitions

Academic Board: the SI governing body responsible for academic oversight, including SI learning and teaching environment and practices, program development and approval, workforce planning, research and scholarship, and academic policies and procedures. The *Academic Board* advises the *Corporate Governance Board* on academic matters.

Academic governance: The structures, systems, and processes through which academic oversight is maintained, ensuring the best quality of learning, teaching, scholarship, and research at SI.

Academic integrity: the standards and values that must be embedded in all academic activities, such as accountability, fairness, honesty, and respect.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): The national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education at all levels.

Corporate governance: The structures, systems, and processes through which accountability is maintained, the strategic direction of SI is determined and pursued, performance is monitored and improved, and risks to key operations are managed.

Corporate Governance Board: The SI governing body responsible for the oversight of all SI operations, including the direction-setting, quality assurance, monitoring, and improvement of academic and non-academic operations. It delegates responsibility for academic matters to the *Academic Board*.

Program Advisory Committee: A committee dedicated to reviewing and amending new program proposals, seeking external industry feedback on existing and proposed programs, conducting benchmarking activities, and monitoring program compliance with the relevant standards and

requirements.

Program Monitoring Committee: A committee dedicated to monitoring the quality of higher education programs at SI, primarily through reviewing and resolving student complaints and appeals, processing recognition of prior learning applications, and collating data on student performance and progression.

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015: The Australian national standards for higher education that all higher education providers must meet, regulated by TEQSA.

Learning and Teaching Committee: A committee dedicated to planning and monitoring the quality of learning and teaching at SI, primarily through the development and implementation of the *Learning and Teaching Plan*.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA): Australia's regulatory body that registers and evaluates the performance of higher education providers against the Higher Education Standards Framework, thus ensuring that all students studying a higher education degree in Australia receive a quality education.

Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Academic Board* every three years.

Version History				
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:
1	Academic Board	25/10/2017		25/10/2020
2	Academic Board	06/01/2021	No change. Periodic Review.	06/01/2024

▲ Related documents	
↗	Academic and Professional Integrity Policy
↗	Academic Standards Policy
↗	Corporate Governance Policy
↗	Program Development and Approval Policy
↗	Program Review and Continual Improvement Policy
↗	Learning and Teaching Policy
↗	Learning and Teaching Plan
↗	Workforce Plan
↗	Dean
↗	Program Director - Business
↗	Program Director - ICT

↗ Admissions Committee - Terms of Reference
↗ Corporate Governance Board - Terms of Reference
↗ Learning and Teaching Committee - Terms of Reference
↗ Program Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference
↗ Program Monitoring Committee - Terms of Reference
↗ Academic Board - Terms of Reference

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