

ACADEMIC BOARD CHARTER

Full review presented to Academic Board (5/15),
held on 10 August 2015

1. Establishment

- 1.1. There shall be an Academic Board ('the Board') reporting to the Council. The Board is established under Part 4 - Bodies connected with the University - Division 4 - Academic Board of the *James Cook University Act 1997*(the JCU Act).
- 1.2. The purpose of this charter is to outline the role, responsibilities, composition and operating guidelines of the Board in accordance with the JCU Act, other relevant legislation and other appropriate University Policies and Procedures.
- 1.3. The Charter will be reviewed annually by the Board to ensure it remains consistent with the Board's authority, objectives and responsibilities. The Board or its Chairperson may propose to Council, following that review and from time to time, amendments to this Charter for approval.

2. Authority, Independence and Relationships

- 2.1. The Board has no executive powers, unless delegated to it by the Council.

The Board is a Committee of the Council and is directly responsible to the Council. In discharging its responsibilities the Board has the authority to:

- 2.1.1 Conduct or authorise investigations into matters within its scope of responsibility.
 - 2.1.2 Access information, records and personnel of the University for such purpose.
 - 2.1.3 Request the attendance of any employee, including executive staff, at Board meetings.
 - 2.1.4 Conduct meetings with any relevant Directorates/Divisions/Colleges, as necessary.
 - 2.1.5 Seek advice from external parties and independent experts where the Board reasonably considers it necessary to execute its duties and responsibilities; provisional on obtaining funding approval through Council should this be required.
- 2.2. The Academic Board shall liaise with other committees of Council as required, to ensure:
 - 2.2.1 its statutory and operational responsibilities are met;
 - 2.2.2 there is no material overlap between the functions and duties of the groups; and
 - 2.2.3 frank and meaningful interchange of information.

3. Purpose, Functions, Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. The JCU Act specifies that the Board is to:

- 3.1.1 *advise the council about teaching, scholarship and research matters concerning the university;*
- 3.1.2 *formulate proposals for the academic policies of the university;*
- 3.1.3 *monitor the academic activities of the university's faculties [now Academic Divisions]; and*
- 3.1.4 *promote and encourage scholarship and research at the university.*

- 3.2. Council has further determined that the Board will:

- 3.2.1 monitor the quality of teaching, research and scholarship in the University and provide leadership in the development of policies on quality improvement;
- 3.2.2 provide leadership in the development of policies on student admission, progress and discipline;
- 3.2.3 have academic governance oversight of all JCU operations, including collaborative arrangements and off-shore operations.

- 3.3. The Board shall:

- 3.3.1 perform the duties and responsibilities specified in Schedule A;
- 3.3.2 consider and report on matters referred to it by the Council or the Vice Chancellor;
- 3.3.3 as soon as practicable after each meeting of the Board, submit a report about the meeting to the Council;
- 3.3.4 perform such other duties approved by the Council;
- 3.3.5 act on behalf of the Council on such other matters as are delegated to it from time to time by the Council; and

3.3.6 advise the Council on such other matters that are within its duties and responsibilities, as referred by the Council or as it deems appropriate.

4. Membership

4.1. The Board shall comprise the following members:

- Chairperson, Academic Board (acknowledged academic leader) - appointed by Council (Chair)
- Deputy Chairperson – appointed by Council, staggered term with Chairperson (Deputy Chair)
- Vice Chancellor
- Chairs of Academic Board sub-committees (2)
- Students (2) – appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board
- Academics, who are also Experts (6) (selected on application, on skills/expertise – engagement, research, teaching and learning, Indigenous education, quality, scholarship) appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board.
- Additional members may be coopted as necessary (x2) and appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board.

4.2 The Executive Committee of the Board shall comprise the following members:

- The Chairperson
- The Deputy Chairperson
- The Vice Chancellor

4.3 The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will be appointed in accordance with the “Procedures for the Appointment of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Academic Board” as approved by the Chancellor.

4.4 The Chairperson will be appointed by the Council for a period of up to three years.

4.5 The Deputy Chairperson will be appointed by the Council for a period of up to three years which does not coincide with the term of the Chairperson.

4.6 The Duties of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Academic Board are in accordance with the “Statement of Duties of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson” as approved by the Chancellor.

The Deputy Chairperson is to act as Chairperson –

- (a) when there is a vacancy in the office of Chairperson; and
- (b) while the Chairperson cannot perform the functions of the office.

4.7 Appointed members, who shall be recorded in a membership list for appending to the Charter, shall serve for a period of no less than 1 year and no greater than two years. Should an appointed member vacate their office before the expiry of their term, the Secretary shall follow the prescribed procedures to replace this member.

4.8 Coopted and Additional members shall have appropriate qualifications/experience and may be from outside the University. Appointments including appointments of coopted and additional members shall be for a period of up to two years and shall be recorded in a membership list for appending to the Charter, shall be until their successors are appointed or until they resign from the Board or as Council members cease to be members of the Council subject to the maximum term as set out in the National Governance Protocols of 12 years.

4.9 Before appointing a member, the Board shall:

- 4.9.1 undertake consultation as appropriate; and
- 4.9.2 give consideration to and be mindful of geographic reach, gender and organizational membership, consistent with the process of appointment of members of Council Committees.

4.10 Any person assuming a role in Board business on behalf of another person as a consequence of an acting or nominee arrangement (e.g. acting as the *ex officio* member, Deputy Chairman assuming chairmanship) shall, as far as practicable consult and report through that other person.

4.11 Attendance by others at Meetings - the Board or its Chairperson may invite other persons internal to the University, as required for the purposes of the Board, to attend meetings as advisors. In the case of the Academic Board and its sub-committees it will be in accordance with the *Observer Policy*.

5 Secretariat

- 5.1 The University Secretary or nominee shall be the Secretary to the Board. There may be an Assistant or Minutes Secretary to assist the Secretary.
- 5.2 The Secretary, in consultation with the Chair, will prepare and send notices of meetings, agendas, will accurately transcribe all decisions of the Board and table all correspondence, reports and other information relevant to the Board's activities and operations. The Governance & Corporate Services Directorate shall provide the resources necessary for the performance of the Board.

6 Convening a Meeting

- 6.1 The Board shall meet as often as necessary in order to perform its functions. It is recommended that the Board meet at least four times per year and the schedule of meetings will be agreed in advance, however the number of meetings may vary in accordance with the volume of business that falls within the remit of the Board.
- 6.2 Meetings shall be convened by either the Chairperson or the Secretary and the Secretary shall send a notice of meeting in reasonable time to all members of the Board. For the purposes of accountability and meeting efficiency, all meetings shall be run according to a pre-determined agenda with items presented under an item coversheet that clearly identifies the recommended action.
- 6.3 The Board should determine its own agenda, ensuring appropriate consultation to include emerging issues and emphasis on the most significant risks and threats. Proposals for agenda items from Board members are to be submitted to the Secretary for consideration by the Chairperson for inclusion on the agenda. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Secretary, shall determine the agenda. The agenda and relevant papers will be distributed to members at least five working days before the meetings.
- 6.4 The Board may appoint sub-committees and working parties to report to the Board on specific matters which are the responsibility of the Board.

7 Conduct of Meeting

7.1 Except as hereinafter provided the Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board. If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Chairperson shall preside. If the Deputy Chairperson is absent also, the members present shall elect one of their number to preside.

7.2 A quorum exists at a meeting of the Board if a simple majority of its members are present.

7.3 Questions arising at a meeting of the Board shall be determined by consensus, however when required a question shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of the Board present and voting. The Chairperson at a meeting of the Board shall have a vote, and in the case of an equality of votes, a second or casting vote.

8 Rules for the Conduct of Business and Ethical Practices

8.1 Subject to the general control of the Council, the Board shall make its own rules for the conduct of its business that are in keeping with its Charter.

8.2 Members are required to declare any interests, in accordance with the University's *Conflict of Interest of Members of Council Policy* and the *Code of Conduct for Council Members* that could constitute a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest with respect to participation on the Board. The declaration must be made on appointment to the Board and in relation to specific agenda items at the outset of each Board meeting, and be updated as necessary.

8.3 Confidentiality issues shall be dealt with in accordance with the University's *Confidentiality Provisions - JCU Council, Council "Committees", Controlled Entity Directors and Nominee Directors of Non-Controlled Entities*. The Board will receive the provisions each year at its first meeting.

9 Reporting Obligations

9.1 As soon as practicable after each meeting, the Board shall submit minutes of the meeting confirmed by the Chairperson to the Council. The minutes shall include:

- 9.1.1 advice, with recommendations as relevant, in respect to those matters set out in Schedule A;
- 9.1.2 confirmation of action taken in respect of any matter for which delegated authority has been exercised; and
- 9.1.3 advice on other matters referred to it by Council or any other Committee of Council or that the Board wishes to draw to the attention of the Council.

10 Executive Actions/Circularised Resolutions

10.1 Where circumstances do not allow a matter relevant to the duties and responsibilities of the Board to be put to a meeting of the Board, and a resolution of the Board is required, the Chairperson shall cause the matter to be considered by members by circularised resolution. The principles and procedures adopted by the Council for managing business by circularised resolution apply.

10.2 Where it is not practicable for the matter in 10.1 above to be put to members by circularised resolution, the Chairperson or Secretary may act executively on the matter where delegated authority has been agreed.

10.3 Where it is necessary for the Chairperson to have a matter determined as in 10.1 or 10.2 above, the approval shall be reported by the Secretary to the next meeting of the Board and where appropriate to the Council.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- 1. Procedures for Appointment of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Academic Board**
- 2. Duties of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Academic Board**
- 3. Procedures for the Appointment of Academics who are also Experts**

Schedule A

1. Delegations of Authority of the Board

- 1.1 All delegations of authority of the JCU Council will appear in the Council's Delegations Register. More specifically, those delegations concerned with the academic activities will predominately appear in the *Schedule of Academic Delegations* and will be made on the basis of compliance with current relevant policy and procedures.
- 1.2 The Board may establish one or more committees for effectively performing its functions.
- 1.3 Any sub-committee established by the Board is taken to be properly constituted.
- 1.4 The Board is responsible for establishing and monitoring the role, responsibilities, composition and operating guidelines of its sub-committee(s).
- 1.5 Where appropriate, some authority may be delegated by the Council to a sub-committee of the Board but only where the Chairperson of the Academic Board is a member of that sub-committee.
- 1.6 Where appropriate, some authority may be delegated by the Council to the Chairperson of the Board including the authority to approve academic curriculum matters but only where the Chairperson of the Board is a member of the relevant Board of Studies in an Academic Division.
- 1.7 Any such authority so delegated by the Council to a sub-committee or to the Chairperson will be referenced in sub-committees' and Boards of Studies' Terms of Reference and the Schedule of Academic Delegations.

2. Functions and Role of the Board

The Board is a committee of the Council and the principal academic body of the University with overall responsibility for academic leadership, academic governance and academic quality assurance of the academic operations at the University. [The Board's functions and role are informed by the specific provider registration standards particularly relevant to academic governance as elaborated in TEQSA's Guidance note on Academic Governance and driven by:](#)

2.1 Academic Policy and Delegations, Processes and Procedures

The Board will:

- 2.1.1 lead in the development of academic delegations, integrated academic policies and procedures;
- 2.1.2 maintain oversight of the review of academic delegations, academic policies and procedures to ensure currency and adequacy; and
- 2.1.3 monitor impact of academic policy and procedures and any corrective actions, on areas such as student performance and teaching and learning outcomes;

2.2 Academic Leadership

Academic Leadership in the development and maintenance of all academic standards to:

- 3.2.1 provide strong independent academic leadership;
- 3.2.2 reflect the strategic intent across the University; and
- 3.2.3 contribute to the development and review of the academic components of the University Plan;

2.3 Academic Quality Assurance

Oversight of academic quality assurance through monitoring of continuous improvement across academic operations, including regular consideration of comparative data on course performance, to provide evidence of improvement in academic outcomes over time. To ensure the quality of each course of study leading to a higher education award, the Board will:

- 2.3.1 maintain oversight of academic and research integrity, including monitoring of potential risks;
- 2.3.2 monitor and initiate action to improve performance against institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes;
- 2.3.3 critically evaluate the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations;
- 2.3.4 evaluate the effectiveness of institutional monitoring, review and improvement of academic activities; and
- 2.3.5 review its own operations and effectiveness (cyclical external reviews)

2.4 Developing Scholarship

Oversight and leading development of scholarship (including disciplinary and teaching and learning scholarship) across academic operations will:

- 2.4.1 ensure sustained and engaged scholarship which is inclusive of academic staff operating in a full-time, part-time and sessional capacity;
- 2.4.2 contribute to the development of quality approaches to teaching and developing teaching and learning pedagogies across a range of delivery modes; and
- 2.4.3 provide systematic communications strategy.

2.5 Staff professional development

Provide input into the development of an academic staff professional development strategy (although ultimately management responsibility) by considering gaps in academic skills and mentoring and other professional development activities. The Board will monitor effectiveness of these activities to:

- 2.5.1 strengthen the professional academic skills of workforce;
- 2.5.2 engage with academic professional development;
- 2.5.3 oversee staff and student academic integrity; and
- 2.5.4 improve quality of teaching, learning, research and research training.

2.6 Maintenance of Academic Standards

The oversight of alignment of academic standards with strategic aspirations and oversight of compliance with TEQSA Act (Threshold Standards) will:

- 2.6.1 monitor course and research performance;
- 2.6.2 undertake cyclic course performance reviews;
- 2.6.3 lead University-wide discussion on JCU course structures;
- 2.6.4 monitor the academic activity of Divisions and Colleges; and
- 2.6.5 adopt and incorporate the Australian Government Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) critically scrutinising, approving and accrediting courses of study and their associated qualifications.

2.7 Protection of Academic Integrity

The Board will ensure that policies, procedures and processes are in place to monitor and protect the academic integrity of the student experience including:

- 2.7.1 the protection against plagiarism and cheating;
- 2.7.2 assurance that assessment processes and moderation practices are subject to scrutiny and review; and
- 2.7.3 that the support processes (including review mechanisms) are understood by both staff and students.

2.8 Relationship between Academic Board and Senior Management Group

The Chairperson shall be a member of the VCAC and the University Executive. The Charter recognises that the separation of roles between governance and management will be maintained by the absence of any operational delegation by the Chair of the Board.

The Board acknowledges:

- from time to time the VCAC is required to consider Academic Course proposals in line with delegated responsibilities;
- the review and monitoring of academic related University Level Performance Measures; and
- the Divisional review cycle.

Approval Details

Policy sponsor:	University Secretary
Approval authority:	Council
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Date for next review:	06/2016

Modification History

Version no.	Approval date	Implementation date	Details
15-2	03/09/15	03/09/15	Further amendments following Academic Governance Review and full alignment review.
15-1	14/05/15	14/05/15	Following Academic Governance Review.
13-1	12/04/2013		Formatted to new charter model; minor amendment to 6.4 and to Schedule 2 (details of amendments in Council minutes (2/13))
12-1	05/04/2012	06/04/2012	
09-1	09/10/2009		
08-1	21/02/2008		
06-1	07/12/2006		
05-4	01/12/2005		
05-3	07/10/2005		
05-2	11/08/2005		
05-1	23/06/2005		
04-1	02/12/2004		
00-2	01/06/2000	01/03/2001	
00-1	11/04/2000		
99-1	03/06/1999		
98-1	06/08/1998		
97-1	04/12/1997		