



The University Secretary's Role

This role statement is provided for information only as a guide to the typical range of duties undertaken by a University Secretary. This Statement recognises that responsibilities vary between universities and does not purport to be a definitive role statement for a university Secretary, however so described within each institution. The statement aims to incorporate current understanding of best practice. It incorporates material contained in the UK Committee of University Chairmen's *Template for Role Description for Clerks to University Governing Bodies*. Each of the responsibilities outlined in the Statement is a vital part of, and pivotal to, ensuring every university has a robust system of good corporate governance. It is up to each university to decide how all such responsibilities are assigned and delegated, to ensure that the university is served by appropriately skilled and experienced governance professionals.

Responsibilities may include:

▶ **Promote good governance**

- *Works with the Chancellor, Council¹ (and its committees/boards) and the Vice-Chancellor to establish and implement good governance practices including evaluation surveys; governance audits; 360° feedback; one-on-one performance reviews; and internal and/or external reviews of governance processes.*
- *Provides advice and secretariat support to the Council, other decision-making bodies and management in the good governance of the University.*

▶ **Assistance/Support to the Chancellor**

- *Provides high level advice and strategic support to the Chancellor.*
- *Assists in the assessment and strategy development for addressing the required balance of skills, knowledge and experience of Council (and its committees/boards).*

▶ **Assistance/Support to the Vice-Chancellor**

- *Provides high level governance advice to the Vice-Chancellor.*

▶ **Assistance/Support to the Chair of Academic Board**

- *Provides high level governance advice to the Chair of Academic Board.*

▶ **Advice to Council and Council Committees and Boards**

- *Ensures that members of Council (and its committees/boards) are provided with the information necessary for them to fulfil their responsibilities.*

▶ **Management of meetings, agendas and minutes**

- *Ensures timely distribution of Notices and agendas of meetings of the Council*
- *Ensures that the agenda papers are prepared and forwarded to members of Council (and its committees/boards) in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.*
- *Ensures timely preparation, confirmation, distribution to members and filing of Minutes of meetings of the Council (and its committees/boards).*

¹ "Council" is used as the generic term for the governing body of the University.



▶ **Council Induction and Professional Development**

- *Coordinates the Induction Program for new members of Council (and its committees/boards), and conducts those segments of the Program relating to the operations of the Council.*
- *Coordinates in consultation with the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor the conduct of Workshops and professional development activities for members of Council (and its committees/boards).*

▶ **Conflicts of Interests**

- *Maintains a register of conflicts of interests of members of Council (and its committees) and advises the Chancellor in respect of any real or potential conflict of interests arising for members of Council (and its committees) or for the Chancellor.*
- *Maintains a Register of Pecuniary Interests.*

▶ **Relationship Management**

- *Works closely with the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor to maintain strong and productive relationships between Council and the senior management of the University.*

▶ **Advice and liaison point for Council members**

- *Is the main point of contact together with the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor for members of Council (and its committees/boards), including for members wishing to obtain information direct from officers of the University.*
- *Provides guidance to the Chancellor and members of Council (and its committees/boards) on their responsibilities under the law (including obtaining legal advice as required), the Standing Orders and the Rules of the University to which they are subject and how these should be discharged.*

▶ **Communication with external stakeholders**

- *Is responsible for communication with the State Minister for Education, the relevant State Education Departments, Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency, and officers of the relevant Commonwealth Departments, in respect of governance compliance issues and Council resolutions which require notification to, or action by the Minister or the Department(s).*

▶ **Legal services**

- *Has oversight responsibility for the provision of legal services.*
- *Assists in the protection of the University's reputation (including responding to legal challenges).*

▶ **Compliance**

- *Oversees the effective discharge of the University's statutory and legislative obligations.*
- *Provides advice on obligations and compliance in relation to the provider registration and other such requirements.*

▶ **Council Committees/Boards**

- *Ensures the smooth operation of Council committees/boards.*
- *Provides secretariat support to committees/boards of the Council (including but not limited to Academic Board, Audit and Compliance Committee, Finance Committee, Membership Nomination Committee, Remuneration Committee).*



- ▶ **Common Seal**
 - *Maintains custody of and controls over the use of the Common Seal.*
 - *Maintains a record of the use of the Common Seal and provides reports to Council.*

- ▶ **Council and Committee/Board Membership Maintenance**
 - *Acts as Returning Officer for Council and other elections.*
 - *Conducts statutory election and appointment processes for Council and its committees/boards as prescribed (often under Statute).*
 - *Oversees members' attendance registers for Annual Reports.*
 - *Undertakes all necessary actions in relation to appointments to Council and its committees/boards.*
 - *Maintains members' registers for Council and its committees/boards.*

- ▶ **Council budget**
 - *Makes budget submissions to the Vice-Chancellor to secure adequate resources for the performance of the Council's (and its committees/boards) and the Secretariat's responsibilities.*

- ▶ **Delegations/policies/legislative framework (Statutes etc) Maintenance**
 - *Is responsible for maintaining Council delegations.*
 - *Is the Policy Custodian and maintains the Policy Library.*
 - *Is responsible for publishing, maintaining and managing amendments to the University Statutes (or Regulations), By-Laws and Rules.*

- ▶ **Information Privacy and Access**
 - *Has responsibility for discharging the University's responsibilities under relevant Privacy and Information access legislation (including FOI/RTI/IP).*

- ▶ **Other**
 - *May be responsible for areas such as:*
 - *Oversight of the preparation and lodgement of the Annual Report*
 - *Records and Archives management*
 - *Prescribed statutory roles including (but not limited to) the management of and annual reporting on Public Interest Disclosures (Whistleblowers)*
 - *The role of company secretary for, or the provision of secretariat support to, University-controlled entities*
 - *Risk management*
 - *Providing secretariat support to University-level appeal processes*
 - *Maintenance of various registers:*
 - *Reportable gifts register*
 - *Special payments register*