

AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY	Council
PARENT BODY	Council
SUBCOMMITTEES	Education Committee Research Committee Courses and Admissions Committee
REPORTING	Council
OPERATION	Indefinite
LAST REVIEWED	6 May 2026 (Senate) 21 May 2026 (Council)
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Senior Governance Officer (Academic Senate) Contact: academic.senate@flinders.edu.au
PURPOSE	The Academic Senate is the peak academic governance body at Flinders University responsible for academic governance on behalf of the University Council, with authority to approve matters delegated to it by Council.

TERMS OF REFERENCE**RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Senate will approve:
 - 1.1 all policies and policy areas relating to academic governance, standards and operations including those reflected in schedule A of the Flinders Policy Framework;
 - 1.2 the Education Strategy and the Research Strategy/Research Plan;
 - 1.3 the establishment and renewal of Research Institutes and Centres and Teaching Centres and Institutes, by reference to the performance expectations and criteria set out in the applicable policies and, where applicable, the outcomes of their periodic reviews; and
 - 1.4 selected awards, prizes and scholarships and other awards of recognition in accordance with relevant policy.
2. Senate will set and monitor institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes, which include academic performance data in relation to:
 - 2.1 the University's Education Strategy; and
 - 2.2 programs and initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning and student support services.
3. Senate will monitor, through the regular reporting of its members and sub-committees, and review where needed the:
 - 3.1 University's research and research training performance, the performance of its Research Institutes and Centres, and the effectiveness of its research strategy;

- 3.2 University's performance against institutional Indigenous student and academic staff strategic objectives;
 - 3.3 Delivery of higher education and research training, and conduct of research, by third-parties;
 - 3.4 Identification and management of material risks in relation to the University's academic operations;
 - 3.5 complaints, allegations of misconduct and breaches of academic or research integrity;
 - 3.6 student appeals and trend analysis;
 - 3.7 creation and re-accreditation of course award qualifications; and
 - 3.8 outcomes of awards, prizes and scholarships.
4. Senate will advise on:
- 4.1 proposals for amendments to the University's academic organisational structure;
 - 4.2 relevant academic management issues that impact on academic freedom and standards; and
 - 4.3 any other matter relating to the academic activities of the University which may be referred to it from time to time.
5. Delegated authorities
- 5.1 Senate may establish sub-committees or working parties to advise it on any matters within these Terms of Reference.
 - 5.2 Except for any policy and policy areas delegated to Senate under the Policy Framework, Senate may delegate its powers and responsibilities to its sub-committees.

QUORUM

6. The quorum is half of the full membership plus one (1) ignoring any fraction.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

7. The Senate will be convened five (5) times per year as agreed, with additional meetings upon the Chair's approval.
8. Urgent matters which fall outside of the agreed meeting cycle, and which are provided in writing to the Executive Officer, may, with the permission of the Chair, be referred for out of session consideration via email. A quorate response must be received from the membership in addition to a majority vote for the matter to be determined.

REPORTING AND REVIEW

9. Senate will report to the next available Council meeting regarding key items addressed.
10. Senate will report annually to Council on its own performance and provide assurance that it has discharged its delegated responsibilities under this Terms of Reference.

11. In conjunction with any wider external Academic Governance review, Senate will be subject to an external review every four (4) years.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

12. Senate will comprise twenty-five (25) members including the fourteen (14) *ex-officio* members specified in paragraph 21 below, ten (10) members who are elected in accordance with paragraph 22 below and the one (1) appointed Chair.
13. Members are expected to:
 - a. act in the interests of the University as a whole;
 - b. contribute the time needed to understand the papers provided;
 - c. apply good analytical skills, objectivity and judgement; and
 - d. actively contribute to discussion during the meetings.
14. The Chair will arrange an induction for Senate members and listed observers.
15. The Chair will provide ongoing mentoring and support for student members of Senate.
16. Proxies for *ex officio* members are allowed with the Chair's prior approval. However, unless they are formally acting in the *ex-officio* role, they will not have voting rights.

CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

17. The Chair will be a senior academic staff member who is appointed by the Vice-Chancellor for a term of two (2) years commencing 1 July.
18. The Chair will be eligible for re-appointment at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor.
19. Where the Chair is absent from a meeting or conflicted with respect to a particular item at a meeting, the Deputy Chair will assume responsibility for managing the meeting or the individual item(s) as appropriate.
20. The Deputy Chair will be appointed from the membership by the Vice-Chancellor and will serve for one (1) year. The Deputy Chair will not function as a proxy for the Chair for Council or Senate sub-committees.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

21. The following persons will be *ex-officio* members of Senate:
 - a. President and Vice-Chancellor
 - b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students)
 - c. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
 - d. Vice-President and Executive Dean of each College
 - e. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Enhancement)
 - f. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)
 - g. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation)
 - h. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research
 - i. FUSA Student President

- j. FUSA Education Officer.

ELECTED MEMBERS AND ELECTION PROCESS

- 22. The following members who are not *ex-officio* will be elected in accordance with the University's election procedures for a two (2) year term:
 - a. one Level E academic from each College, elected by academic staff (as defined in the election procedures) within the relevant College; and
 - b. one Level A – D academic from each College, elected by academic staff (as defined in the election procedures) within the relevant College.
- 23. Where an elected position is not filled as the result of an election process, the Vice-President and Executive Dean from the relevant College will appoint an academic staff member from the bound electorate to serve for the two-year term, giving due consideration to ensuring the membership reflects the diversity of members of the academic community.
- 24. When a casual vacancy occurs:
 - a. within 2 months of an election, it will be filled by appointing the candidate with the next highest number of votes for the remainder of the term. If this is not possible, a member will be appointed by the College's Vice-President and Executive Dean according to paragraph 23 above.
 - b. after 2 months of an election, a member will be appointed by the College's Vice-President and Executive Dean according to paragraph 23 above.

OBSERVERS

- 25. The following positions will ordinarily be observers for Senate to provide subject matter expertise on request, but may be asked to leave or remain for any confidential item as the Chair deems fit:
 - a. Chief Information Officer
 - b. Director, Library Services
 - c. Postgraduate Students Officer, FUSA.
- 26. The General Counsel and University Secretary will be an observer for Senate to provide subject matter expertise but will remain in the meeting for all confidential items.
- 27. Observers do not have voting or speaking rights but may contribute to the meeting when called on by the Chair.

MEETING PROCEDURES

28. AGENDA SETTING

- 28.1 The Agenda will be set two (2) weeks in advance of the Senate meeting, by the Chair, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, General Counsel and University Secretary, and Executive Officer.
- 28.2 Items of business which are outside of the approved Schedule of Business may be submitted to the Executive Officer (one) 1 week in advance of this Agenda setting meeting, for consideration by the Chair.
- 28.3 Papers are due to be submitted to the Executive Officer two (2) weeks prior to the Senate meeting.
- 28.4 Papers will be circulated to members one (1) week prior to the meeting, and late papers at least two (2) days prior.

29. ATTENDANCE

- 29.1 Apologies should be tendered in writing to the Executive Officer as soon as practicable.
- 29.2 Meetings are hosted in person, with an online option available for those who are unable to attend in person but noting however that attendance in person is encouraged. Those members attending online should advise the Executive Officer ahead of the meeting.

30. AGENDA MANAGEMENT

30.1 *Starring of items*

To maintain meeting efficiency, a starring system is used to highlight agenda items that require discussion. Members will be asked at the commencement of a meeting which items they wish to be starred for discussion. Agenda items which are not starred will be taken as having been considered and resolved as approved.

30.2 *Open meeting*

Senate meetings are open to staff and students at Flinders University, subject to paragraph 30.3 below. These observers do not have speaking rights; however, they may do so with the permission of the Chair.

30.3 *Confidential matters*

- a. Senate may go into closed session for the purpose of considering confidential or privileged items if the meeting is quorate.
- b. Items will be deemed confidential, usually during the agenda setting process, if they attract legal privilege, or contain personal affairs, commercial-in-confidence or other proprietary considerations.
- c. All non-members who are present, except for those non-members as the Chair may determine, will be required to leave the meeting room and will not

be readmitted until the Chair declares that the open session has been resumed. For the convenience of attendees, however, the confidential items will usually be scheduled together at the conclusion of the open part of the meeting.

- d. Any matters discussed, or documents considered in closed session remain strictly confidential, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure.

30.4 *Decisions of Senate*

- a. All matters considered by Senate are decided by consensus, subject to (c) below.
- b. Senate may endorse or approve a recommendation before it, with or without amendment.
- c. If Senate cannot resolve a matter by consensus, then that matter is to be resolved by voting on the recommendation(s). Voting is normally by show of hands. A secret ballot may be used at the discretion of the Chair with votes distributed and counted in front of members present at the meeting by the Executive Officer.
- d. If there are an equal number of votes for and against a recommendation, the recommendation lapses. The Chair does not have a casting vote if there is an equality of votes.
- e. The Executive Officer is to notify relevant University staff of Senate decisions that those staff are required to action.

DOCUMENT CONTROL	DATE	RATIONALE
v 1	5 December 2024	Endorsed by the Academic Senate at meeting 5/24 on 13 November 2024 and approved by University Council at meeting 5/24 on 5 December 2024.
v 2	21 May 2026	Updates to clause 3.3 regarding third-party arrangements and clauses 12 and 21 regarding membership. Endorsed by the Academic Senate at meeting 2/26 on 6 May 2026 and approved by University Council at meeting 2/26 on 21 May 2026.