Academic Board Bulletin April 2026

The Academic Board held its second meeting for 2026 on Tuesday 7 April 2026, chaired by Professor Alexander Kist. The meeting welcomed newly appointed Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Paul Mazerolle, new Academic Board members, and several observers including the Chancellor.

Reports to Academic Board

The following reports were received at the 7 April 2026 Academic Board meeting.

Academic Board Chair's Update

The Chair provided an update on initiatives to improve member engagement with Academic Board papers and enhance alignment between reporting and the Board's governance responsibilities. Members were advised that Academic Board working groups, including the Academic Risk Working Group and Academic Board Terms of Reference Working Group, would progressively recommence during 2026. The Chair also encouraged members to attend Education Committee and Research Committee meetings as observers to strengthen collaboration and oversight

Council Report to Academic Board

The Board received an update from the February 2026 Council meeting, including Council's approval of the University's financial statements and key governance matters considered at the commencement of the academic year.

Vice-Chancellor and President's Report

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Paul Mazerolle presented an update on significant institutional and sector developments. Academic Board noted:

- The passage of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) legislation through Parliament.
- The decision to cease delivery of University programs at the Sydney location after 2026, with a formal transition working group established to oversee teach-out arrangements and regulatory obligations.
- Initiatives supporting students experiencing cost-of-living pressures.
- Discussion regarding the University's athletics precinct and opportunities to explore alternative funding models that support both community benefit and institutional sustainability.

- Consideration of scholarship accessibility and opportunities to expand scholarship provision while maintaining affordability.
- Governance and reporting arrangements associated with the Canterbury Institute of Technology (CIT) Sydney teach-out process

Students and Education Portfolio Report

The Board received an update on key priorities and achievements across the Students and Education portfolio, including:

- Delivery of Trimester 1 enrolment targets and growth in first-preference applications from Queensland students.
- Improvements in student credit assessment processes, including the processing of approximately 1,000 credit applications with a 14-day turnaround.
- Participation in the Higher Education Services Australia-New Zealand Credit Management Initiative, incorporating technology-enabled and artificial intelligence-supported approaches to credit assessment.
- Progress in curriculum co-design with TAFE Queensland to strengthen student pathway opportunities.
- Ongoing work relating to gender-based violence prevention, child safe obligations and emerging sector expectations concerning antisemitism and racism.
- Discussions on student feedback, assessment practices and opportunities to improve understanding of how student feedback informs continuous improvement activities.

Academic and Research Portfolio Report

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) Professor John Bell presented an update on portfolio priorities and emerging issues. The Board noted:

- Ongoing work to strengthen foreign interference risk management and due diligence processes.
- National developments in research funding and strategic priorities within the higher education sector.
- Positive outcomes from Nursing and Midwifery accreditation activities.
- Curriculum renewal initiatives aimed at supporting industry relevance and graduate outcomes.
- Opportunities to utilise artificial intelligence to enhance administrative and academic processes.
- Improved governance clarity arising from the University's revised organisational structure.

Research Committee Report

Academic Board received the report from the Research Committee meeting held on 11 March 2026. Key matters included:

- Research funding successes and strategic program investments.
- Executive recruitment activity across major research institutes.
- Updates on state and national research consultations.

- Endorsement of mandatory animal ethics training requirements.
- Progress on strategic research initiatives and activities within the Graduate Research School.

Education Committee Report

The 12 March Education Committee meeting was cancelled. No report this cycle.

Academic Governance

Research Committee Terms of Reference

Academic Board approved amendments to the Research Committee Terms of Reference arising from organisational changes and the establishment of a commercialisation function. During discussion, members considered opportunities to strengthen higher degree research student representation and confirmed that observer arrangements for the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) would be reviewed after six months.

Academic Quality Policy Report

The Board noted updates to Academic Quality Policy documents to reflect recent organisational changes and revised role responsibilities. Discussion also considered policy review cycles, accountability arrangements and opportunities to improve alignment with the forthcoming Policy Framework Review. Members highlighted the importance of incorporating First Nations data governance considerations into future policy development work.

Strategic Discussions

Academic Quality Framework

Academic Board undertook a strategic discussion on the ongoing refinement of the Academic Quality Framework (AQF).

The Board noted that the framework has been operating for approximately three years and identified opportunities to simplify processes, strengthen accountability and improve reporting pathways. Discussion focused on improving program review processes, benchmarking activities, data quality and the integration of quality assurance information to better support decision-making.

Members also highlighted the importance of strengthening student partnership, embedding First Nations perspectives, improving the use of institutional systems and ensuring quality teaching and continuous improvement remain central to the framework. The Board agreed that ongoing consideration through Education Committee and Academic Board would support further refinement of the AQF over the coming two years.

Higher Degree by Research Supervisor Internal Audit

The Board considered the outcomes of the Higher Degree by Research Supervisor Internal Audit and discussed opportunities to strengthen supervisory practices and consistency across the University. Discussion focused on supervisory processes, consultation and cultural advice, workload allocation, disciplinary expertise and the University's obligations to support high-quality Higher Degree by Research student outcomes. Members noted the broader organisational context in which the audit had been undertaken and acknowledged the importance of continuing to strengthen HDR supervision and support arrangements.

Other Matters

The Board noted that future discussions would include updates on Canterbury Institute of Technology Sydney teach-out arrangements and a strategic discussion on assessment and student experience.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of Academic Board was scheduled for **Tuesday 26 May 2026** in the Council Chamber, Toowoomba Campus.

2026 Academic Board Meetings

Academic Board meetings for 2026 are scheduled as follows:

- Meeting 3 – 26 May 2026
- Meeting 4 – 28 July 2026
- Meeting 5 – 22 September 2026
- Meeting 6 – 24 November 2026

If you wish to attend Academic Board as an observer, please forward your request to attend to Academic.Board@unisq.edu.au a least three business day prior to the meeting.