

Honorary Degrees Committee Charter

Introduction

1. The Australian National University (ANU) Council has established the Honorary Degrees Committee (“the Committee”) in accordance with section 18 of the *Australian National University Act 1991*.
2. This Charter sets out the Honorary Degrees Committee’s objective, authority, composition and tenure, roles and, and reporting and administrative arrangements.

Objective

3. The objective of the Committee is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Council on proposals for the awarding of an honorary degree by the University.

Authority

4. The Council authorises the Committee, within the scope of its role and responsibilities, to:
 - obtain any information it needs from any employee and/or external party (subject to their legal obligation to protect information);
 - discuss any matters with external parties (subject to confidentiality considerations); and
 - request the attendance of any ANU employee, or Council member at Committee meetings.

Composition and Tenure

5. The Committee consists of:
 - ex officio, the Chancellor (Chair);
 - ex officio, the Pro-Chancellor;
 - ex officio, the Vice-Chancellor;
 - 1 Deputy Vice-Chancellor, appointed by the Vice-Chancellor;
 - Up to 2 other members of Council, appointed by the Council, who are not students or employees of the University;

- 1 member of the academic staff drawn from the ANU College of Engineering, Computing and Cybernetics, the ANU College of Health & Medicine, or the ANU College of Science
- 1 member of the academic staff drawn from the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences, the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, the ANU College of Business and Economics, or the ANU College of Law
- either the undergraduate student member of Council **or** the postgraduate student member of Council, appointed by the Chancellor after consultation with both members.

6. In the absence of the Chancellor at a meeting, the Pro-Chancellor or, in the absence of the Pro-Chancellor, a member of the Committee elected by the Committee, will act as Chair for the meeting.

7. Members who are not *ex-officio* are appointed for up to three years and are eligible for re-appointment.

8. The Council will have regard to a balanced membership, including with respect to background, gender, geographic location, culture and identity, and the need for both continuity and regular renewal in filling positions on the Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities

9. The Committee exercises such functions, responsibilities and authorities that are assigned or delegated to it by Council from time to time, but only such executive powers as are explicitly delegated to it.

10. The Committee's responsibilities, subject to revision by Council, are to monitor, review and make recommendations to Council with respect to:

- proposals for the awarding of an honorary degree by the University;
- the criteria and procedural arrangements for the awarding of honorary degrees by the University; and
- the revocation of the awarding of an honorary degree, consistent with University procedures.

Responsibilities of Members

11. Members of the Committee are expected to understand and observe the legal requirements of the *Australian National University Act 1991*, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the *ANU Governance Statute*.

12. Members are also expected to:
- a. act always in the best interests of the University as a whole, with this obligation to be observed in priority over any duty a member may owe to those electing or appointing them;
 - b. act in good faith, honestly and for a proper purpose;
 - c. exercise appropriate care and diligence;
 - d. not improperly use their position to gain an advantage for themselves or someone else; and
 - e. disclose and avoid conflicts of interest (with appropriate procedures for that purpose similar to those for public companies)¹.

Reporting

13. The Committee will present a summary of its activities each year as part of the University's Annual Report presented to Council.
14. The Committee may, at any time, report to the Council any other matter it deems of sufficient importance to do so.

Administrative Arrangements

Meetings and Planning

15. The Committee will ordinarily meet up to three times per year on dates determined by the Committee, subject to there being honorary degree proposals to consider.
16. A proposal for the award of an honorary degree must be considered highly confidential until the Council resolves to admit the person concerned to the degree. If the Committee decides not to accept a proposal, the Committee Secretary will inform the proposers accordingly.
17. The Chair is required to call a meeting if asked to do so by the Council.
18. The Chair will decide if a meeting is required should one be requested by another Committee member.

Attendance at Meetings and Quorums

19. A quorum shall consist of 50 per cent of Committee members (rounded up to the nearest whole number) who hold office for the time being.

¹ As outlined in the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities (2018)
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20. A member may vote on a resolution at a meeting of the Committee by email or in writing provided that the member submits their vote to the Committee Secretary before the commencement of the relevant meeting.
21. Meetings may be held in person or online.
22. Meetings of the Committee are closed and confidential, and attendance at meetings by non-Committee members, including members of the Council, are only by invitation from the Chair.

Secretariat

23. The Corporate Governance and Risk Office (CGRO) provides secretariat support to the Committee.
24. CGRO will be responsible for the presentation of proposals for honorary degrees to the Committee.
25. CGRO will make every effort to ensure that the agenda for each meeting and supporting papers are circulated, after approval from the Chair, at least 7 days before the meeting.
26. CGRO will ensure the minutes of the meetings are prepared and maintained. Minutes shall be authorised by the Chair for circulation to members for consideration prior to approval being sought from the Committee at the next meeting.

Conflicts of Interest

27. Upon joining the Committee and then once a year thereafter, Committee members provide written declarations to the Council declaring any material personal interests that precludes them from being members of the Committee. External members consider past employment, consultancy arrangements and related issues in making these declarations. Council needs to be satisfied that there are sufficient processes in place to manage any real, perceived or potential conflicts.
28. Committee members must declare any material personal interests at the start of each meeting or before discussion of the relevant agenda item or topic. Details of material personal interests declared by Committee members, and actions taken, are appropriately recorded in the minutes.

Induction

29. CGRO maintains a program of induction, training and awareness-raising for Committee members.

Assessment and Review

30. The Chair of the Committee will initiate, every two years, a review of the performance of the Committee and this Charter, with the outcomes to be reported to Council. The review of performance will be conducted on a self-assessment basis unless otherwise determined by the Council.

Approved by resolution of the Australian National University Council at its meeting of 28 July 2023.