

ACADEMIC STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

(As approved by 20/5 Academic Board on 11 November 2020 – AB/20-5/85.2)

Purpose

1. The Academic Standards Framework (framework) guides the standards for the UTS's activities and its alignment to the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#) (HESF 2015) to effectively achieve the [UTS's strategic direction](#), and desired academic outcomes.
2. The framework seeks to ensure that UTS meets threshold or minimum requirements in all academic areas (including teaching, learning, research, scholarship and engagement), with commitment to reflective practice and continuous improvement.

Scope

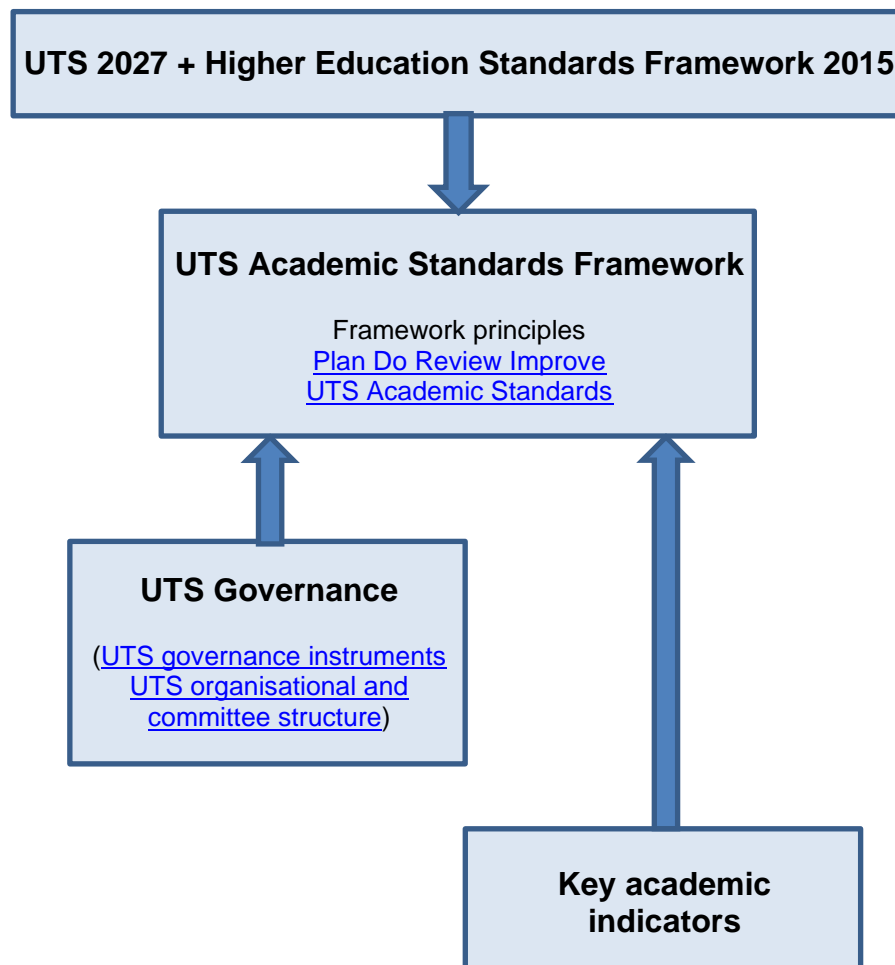
3. The framework is relevant to:
 - a. Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies); and
 - b. all staff and students.
4. The framework covers all areas of academic activities, including:
 - a. student participation and attainment;
 - b. learning environment;
 - c. teaching;
 - d. research;
 - e. research training;
 - f. quality assurance;
 - g. governance and accountability;
 - h. integrity;
 - i. supervision and progression;
 - j. internships and work placements;
 - k. representation, communication and information; and
 - l. external engagement and environment.

Framework

5. The [framework principles](#), the [Plan Do Review Improve](#) (PDRI) cycle adopted by UTS, and the [UTS Academic Standards](#) guide UTS's approach to quality assurance, quality improvement and therefore, UTS's alignment with the [HESF 2015](#).

Framework flowchart

6. The flowchart below provides the inter-relationship of various elements of the framework.



Framework principles

7. UTS's academic activities must be:
- delivered effectively with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
 - aligned with the [UTS strategic direction](#);
 - predicated on achieving high quality outcomes for students, beneficiaries of research, external partners and other stakeholders;
 - aligned with and responsive to regulatory requirements;
 - based on commitment to continuous improvement and aspiration to excel, underpinned by external benchmarking for academic quality and outcomes;
 - strengthened by sound academic leadership, staff and student participation, and constancy of purpose of the university and its governance committees;
 - underpinned by UTS's principles of integrity;
 - aligned with UTS's risk management principles; and

- i. well measured and informed, with transparent decision-making in line with UTS accountability systems.

Plan, Do, Review, Improve

8. The [UTS Plan, Do, Review, Improve](#) (PDRI) cycle is the approach used for continuous improvement of quality in processes at UTS. It involves a series of systematic and continuous actions leading to improvements. PDRI cycles are determined at faculty-, school- and unit-level.

UTS Academic Standards

9. UTS Academic Standards ([Appendix 1](#)) refer to the objectives against which performance of academic activities are assessed based on key academic indicators.
10. The UTS Academic Standards apply to the development and delivery of UTS:
 - a. coursework award courses;
 - b. graduate research courses; and
 - c. research.

UTS governance

11. UTS [governance](#) processes outlined in the governance instruments including [UTS Legislation, Rules and Policies](#) and the [organisational and committee structure](#), ensure appropriate strategic and operational oversight of the quality and standards of the UTS's academic activities.
12. Responsible officers identified in the standards are delegated authority under the [UTS Delegations](#) to undertake relevant academic processes as per relevant [policies and procedures](#) to ensure the academic standards are met.

Role of Academic Board in planning for and improving standards

13. As per its [functions and powers](#) defined in the General Rules, Academic Board has a responsibility to establish and maintain academic leadership by sustainably and effectively overseeing, assessing, monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality and outcome of UTS's academic work (including teaching, learning, scholarship, research training and research). Academic Board reports to, or advises Council or the Vice-Chancellor on the quality, standards and benchmarks appropriate to all aspects of UTS's academic work.
14. Academic Board deploys a range of mechanisms and specific tools to implement this framework to achieve continuous improvement, including but are not limited to:
 - a. alignment of terms of reference of Academic Board and its committees with the [HESF 2015](#) to enable the Board to provide a lead role in academic governance in areas of teaching, learning, research, scholarship, policy

- development, monitoring and implementation, and other academic activities;
- b. development of an annual forward plan for Academic Board and its committees that aligns with [UTS strategic direction](#), and is strengthened by a university-wide governance framework (of delegations, rules, governance principles, policies and procedures, supported by local level procedures, guidelines and work instructions), and annual reporting on forward plans. Forward plans should be based on the three key areas that summarise the focus of Academic Board activities:
 - academic strategy;
 - academic quality (covering academic governance, including policy and standards); and;
 - academic risk;
 - c. alignment of Academic Board/committee reports with the [UTS 2027](#) and the three key areas detailed in the forward plan (see b. above);
 - d. an advisory committee (Executive Committee of Academic Board (ECAB)) to support the business of Academic Board and ensure quality interaction between Academic Board and its committees;
 - e. Academic Board surveys (biennial for members of Academic Board and its committees, and quadrennial for stakeholders) to assess Board and committees' effectiveness and recommend necessary improvements;
 - f. regular reviews:
 - annual self-assessment of terms of reference and composition of Academic Board committees;
 - adhoc internal and external reviews of Academic Board's operations and effectiveness;
 - g. extensive collaboration and consultation on key academic matters with students, staff and other stakeholders including:
 - Council (via Council reporting and the Chair of the Academic Board attending Council meetings);
 - senior executives (via Senior Executives Meeting or Vice-Chancellor's Management Group);
 - Academic Board committees including faculty boards ('feedback from Academic Board' – a standing item on agenda);
 - Vice-Chancellor/Provost's feedback to Chair of the Academic Board;
 - Briefings of student members of Academic Board by the Chair of Academic Board;
 - Faculty board visits by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Academic Board;
 - external accreditation agencies for course accreditation (via faculties, Courses Accreditation Committee and faculty boards);

- university community (via Academic Board forums and newsletters);
- h. rigorous, transparent and diligent processes for governance of committee meetings (including recording of actions; minute taking; communication of actions/decisions to relevant stakeholders; and tracking/reporting on the completion of actions and implementation of decisions);
 - i. clear and transparent plans, systems, policies and processes relating to academic activities are operational, implemented and regularly reviewed for continuous improvement via external benchmarking and environmental scans;
 - j. annual assessments of strategic risks and the development of relevant risk management strategies with consideration being given to the faculty and business unit risk assessments performed as part of the Corporate Plan and on-going operations activities.
15. In addition to the above, the 'assurance' processes overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee are part of UTS's key mechanism for continuous quality improvement. These include:
- a. internal audits, investigations, testing and evaluation of controls against risks, and self-assessments administered by the Director, Internal Audit;
 - b. risk assessments, reviews and process improvement activities administered by the Director, Risk; and
 - c. management reviews overseen and evaluated by the Senior Executives.

Framework ownership and support

16. Academic Board is responsible for and approves this framework.
17. The ECAB is responsible for enforcement of, and compliance with, this framework, ensuring that its principles and statements are observed.

UTS ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
1. Admission				
1.1 UTS accepts students who demonstrate the capacity to be successful in their study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission Enrolment Orientation/Induction Credit recognition Student recruitment and outreach Academic support UTS Model of Learning Social Impact Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Board and its committees Provost Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate Services) Director, Equity and Diversity Unit Director, Student Administration Unit Director, UTS International Deans Responsible Academic Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions outcomes (eg student offers to acceptance rates, ATAR and other cut-offs) Proportion of student first preferences (UTS KPI) Retention Diverse student body 	1.1 Admission 4.2 Research Training
1.2 Potential UTS students are provided with a range of entry pathways recognising the diversity of educational and life experiences				1.1 Admission
1.3 UTS provides sufficient, accurate and timely information to allow potential students to make informed education choices				1.1 Admission 7.1 Representation 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students
1.4 UTS supports students in their transition to higher education				1.3 Orientation and Progression 4.2 Research Training
1.5 UTS encourages lifelong learning, including formal, informal and non-formal learning, and provides the opportunity for students to have previous learning recognised for credit in their courses				1.1 Admission 1.2 Credit Recognition and Prior Learning
1.6 UTS encourages and supports a diverse student population		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Director, Equity and Diversity Unit 		2.2 Diversity and Equity

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff and students 		
2. Courses				
2.1 UTS courses are consistent with UTS strategic direction and relevant university strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic and academic work planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculties implement course plan that aligns with strategy 	
2.2 UTS courses meet relevant regulatory and professional accreditation requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Strategic Assessment Course planning Industry Advisory Committees Industry consultation Course accreditation/review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) Deans, Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) and institute and centre directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UTS accreditation Professional accreditation Reputation with industry and the professions (UTS KPI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 1.5 Qualifications and Certification 4.2 Research Training 5.1 Course approval and Accreditation 6.3 Academic Governance
2.3 UTS works with the needs of industry and the professions in the development of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject approval Course/subject preparation and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Academic Programs Office Manager, Higher Education Language and Presentation Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate satisfaction Industry/professions' satisfaction 	
2.4 At UTS, each course has a course-specific graduate profile, which reflects UTS's mission and the related professions and disciplines. Accordingly, to qualify for a UTS award a student must undertake a specified minimum amount of study in that course at UTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UTS course performance reporting Course Experience Questionnaire Student Satisfaction Survey 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student success Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2 Credit Recognition and Prior Learning 1.4 Learning Outcome and Assessment
2.5 UTS students have the opportunity to complement their learning with academic and personal support and development programs, including specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UTS Model of Learning UTS graduate attributes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3 Orientation and Progression 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support 4.2 Research Training

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
programs for students at academic risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity Guidelines for Courses and Subjects • Staff recruitment, induction, and development 			
2.6 UTS research students are each supported with a plan that reflects their academic and professional experiences and goals				4.2 Research Training
2.7 UTS staff have, and maintain, the necessary disciplinary and pedagogical expertise to effectively deliver courses				3.2 Staffing 4.1 Research 4.2 Research Training 6.3 Academic Governance
3. Assessment				
3.1 Assessment at UTS is equitable and timely, and students are provided with avenues to provide feedback and resolve questions and issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination / Assessment • Feedback to students • Academic support • Student education on integrity • Academic Misconduct Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies) • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) • Director, Institute of Media and Learning • Director, Student Administration Unit • Deans, Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) and institute and centre directors • Responsible Academic Officers, subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student retention • Student success • Student satisfaction with subjects (UTS KPI) and course • Assessment report • Student misconduct • Learning outcome 	1.3 Orientation and Progression 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment
3.2 Assessment at UTS is criterion-based, with methods of assessment that are appropriate to the course's graduate attributes and subject's learning outcomes				1.3 Orientation and Progression 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment
3.3 UTS students are provided with formative assessment in the course of learning				1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
		coordinators and appointed assessors		
4. Research				
4.1 UTS research is consistent with UTS strategic direction and relevant university strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research activities • Communication strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each faculty and research centre has implemented a research plan that aligns to UTS Research strategy 	
4.2 UTS seeks external research collaboration, including working with industry and the professions in research development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications for various audiences • Research education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities allocated 	
4.3 UTS staff have, and maintain, the necessary disciplinary and research methodologies to effectively conduct research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher development • Academic work planning • Research strategic planning and alignment • Processes to develop high quality applications aligned with UTS strategic direction • Research facilities management • Development and supervision of doctoral study plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Research and Innovation Office • Deans, Associate Deans (Research) and institute and centre directors • Manager, Research Integrity and Research Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact metrics for faculty, research strength and university • Research leadership index • Number of weighted publications (total and per full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff) • Total research income from all Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) reported categories 	3.2 Staffing 4.1 Research 4.2 Research Training 6.3 Academic Governance
5. Learning Environment				

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
5.1 UTS students' learning is supported by appropriate resources, learning spaces, technologies and other facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus and services design and delivery • UTS Model of Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities allocated 	2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support 4.2 Research Training
5.2 UTS students have the opportunity to engage with the university, community and industry throughout their study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progression • Staff recruitment, induction, and development • Professional experience and work integrated learning • Student feedback surveys • Student logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Board and its committees • Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Resources) • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) • Deans • Director, Institute of Media and Learning • Director, Facilities Management Unit • Director, Information Technology Division (ITD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student success • Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course 	2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure
6. Academic Quality Assurance				
6.1 UTS courses are regularly reviewed against regulatory, academic discipline, and industry standards, as well as student experience of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course accreditation • External accreditation • Performance reporting • Industry participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UTS accreditation • Professional accreditation • Reputation with industry and the 	1.4 Learning Outcome and Assessment 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
6.2 UTS student outcomes are regularly reviewed and quality is assessed against institutional benchmarks with the results used to inform improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UTS planning • Course Experience Questionnaire • Student Satisfaction Survey • Review and improvements cycles • Academic Quality and Standards Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) • Deans, Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) and institute and centre directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professions (UTS KPI) • Student success • Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3 Orientation and Progression 2.2 Diversity and Equality 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement 6.2 Corporate monitoring and Accountability 6.3 Academic Governance
7. Academic Governance				
7.1 The implementation of UTS academic standards is assured by UTS academic governance processes, including risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee structure and meetings • Governance instruments including UTS Legislation, Rules, Delegations and policies • Elections • Assurance Mapping • Induction/ Education Programs • UTS Risk Management Policy and Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and its committees • Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies) • University Secretary and Director, Governance Support Unit • Director, Student Services Unit • Director, Equity and Diversity Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with internal processes (elections, course accreditation, course and subject performance review) • Compliance with external accreditation processes • Compliance with internal processes for stakeholder feedback and student participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 Corporate Governance 6.2 Corporate monitoring and Accountability 6.3 Academic Governance
7.2 UTS students have the opportunity to participate in the academic governance of UTS				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.3 Academic Governance
7.3 UTS academic standards apply to activities undertaken with other parties.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity 5.4 Delivery with Other Parties 6.1 Corporate Governance

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Risk Assessment for Academic Board • Faculty and business unit risk assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Risk • Director, Internal Audit • Deans, and institute and centre directors • Research Integrity Advisers 		
7.4 UTS staff, students and researchers appropriately protect UTS intellectual property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research activities • Research management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Academic Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with internal policy on intellectual property 	4.1 Research 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity
7.5 UTS protects and promotes intellectual freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher development • Communication strategies to inform staff about UTS and faculty resources that support development and management of research projects 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with UTS Principles of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech • Impact metrics for faculty, research strength and university • Research leadership index • Number of weighted publications • Number of weighted publications per full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff • Total research income from all Higher Education Research Data 	6.1 Corporate Governance

Academic Standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF X-Reference
			Collection (HERDC) reported categories	
7.6 UTS staff and students are expected to maintain a high level of academic and research integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student education on academic integrity — online and workshops • Academic Misconduct Procedures 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with academic integrity framework • Assessment report 	4.1 Research 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity
7.7 Mechanisms exist for students to make complaints or appeals on UTS academic matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals and complaints procedures • Policies on student complaints • Guidelines for Research Integrity Breaches 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with internal processes for student complaints and appeals. • Deliver timely resolution of formal complaints and appeals 	2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints 6.3 Academic Governance