

Council meeting
16 February 2026, Kensington campus
Report of outcomes

Matters covered at the meeting

Strategic Focus

Council considered the University's position within a changing national policy and regulatory environment, including legislative developments, sector reforms and government initiatives affecting higher education. This included the University's engagement with recommendations from the Expert Council on University Governance and the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment, as well as the University's new *Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence Policy* effective 1 January 2026. Discussions focused on implications for academic freedom, regulation, and the University's strategic and global positioning. A one-hour training session for Council members on preventing and responding to gender-based violence preceded the meeting.

Council received a presentation on one of its wholly owned subsidiaries, UNSW College, including its history, current offerings and contribution to the University's global reputation. Members also discussed opportunities to strengthen strategic dialogue and support future growth.

Key Matters

External environment and stakeholder engagement

Council considered the University's engagement with government, including work to support the development of regulatory frameworks. Discussion covered the challenges associated with proposed policy settings, including student caps, visa processing and the timing of admissions, as well as complexity in current policy definitions.

Student experience and enrolments

Council noted the success of 2026 Orientation Week, including strong participation and the contribution of student organisations and event organisers. Council reviewed student enrolment data, noting overall load and load across faculties, as well as the impact of caps and visa processing issues. Council also considered the 2025 Student Experience Survey results, including measures of attrition, employability, sense of community and peer engagement. Discussion focused on initiatives underway to improve student experience, with particular attention to strengthening belonging among domestic postgraduate students. Members also considered the role of digital experience and artificial intelligence in supporting student outcomes.

Academic Governance

Council noted work on the UNSW Rules review, Academic Board events for new members and engagement with the Australian Chairs of Academic Board and Senates. Council considered developments relating to academic freedom in the context of national reforms and a changing regulatory landscape.

Research and global activity

Council noted philanthropic outcomes and milestones and received an update on international initiatives, including progress on UNSW Bengaluru. Council also discussed the Green Fellowships, an initiative to strengthen academic capability and enhance the University's reputation.

Risk, safety and compliance

Council considered the preliminary 2025 complaints report, including regulatory expectations and emerging areas of government focus. Council also reviewed the February 2026 Health and Safety report. Discussion focused on findings from near-miss reporting, opportunities to improve data

presentation and management responses, and faculty reporting line structures, including options to strengthen advisory approaches. Council received and discussed matters on wage compliance involving sustainable payroll compliance and the University's response to the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency's Statement of Regulatory Expectations.

Governing Body Matters and Performance

Council considered recently approved policy documents and approved amendments to the Delegations Policy relating to matters reserved to Council, along with consequential changes to the relevant schedule, with effect from 17 February 2026. Council also approved a number of appointments to its committees and noted the outcome of the Deputy Chancellor election.

Disclaimer

This report summarises the key themes and decisions of the meeting. It is not a complete record of proceedings and does not include all matters discussed or the full detail of decisions. Some matters may be omitted for legal or commercial confidentiality.

Further Information

Further information on UNSW governance, including Council functions, membership and committees, is available through the University's governance resources.

Council [Membership](#)

Council Member [Biographies](#)

[Council Governance Documents](#)

- Charter
- Council and Council Committee Code of Conduct and Values
- Council Constitution Rules
- Council Appointment Policy

[Council Proceedings](#)

Council meetings are open to members of the University: staff, students and graduates and any other person invited to attend by the Chancellor or the University Secretary. Bookings are required with the University Secretary (via council@unsw.edu.au) a minimum of three business days before the day of the meeting. Observers will be asked to leave for confidential items.