

Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed new and returning members, and reflected on the important role of the Academic Board in supporting strong academic governance and two-way communication across the University.

Members received an update on developments in the higher education sector, including the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence, the Expert Council on University Governance Final Report and proposed governance reforms, and the establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC). Discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining focus on the University's core mission and the alignment of the UNSW Strategy: *Progress for All* with government priorities.

The Vice-Chancellor also provided updates on campus development initiatives supporting the transition to the flex-semester calendar, including new teaching spaces, Barker College redevelopment proposals and campus infrastructure improvements.

Academic Board President's Business

The Academic Board noted the report of the Academic Board President, the results of the 2025 Academic Board Self-evaluation Survey and the 2026 Annual Workplan.

The Academic Board endorsed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Academic Board, University Committees and the Board of Studies for approval by UNSW Council. Members also noted academic promotions effective from 1 January 2026 and welcomed new Academic Board members.

Student representatives reported positively on Orientation Week activities and outlined plans to bring additional student matters to the Academic Board in 2026.

Discussion Topics

2026 University Annual Plan

The Academic Board received a presentation on the 2026 University Annual Plan, the first year of implementation of the University's ten-year *Progress for All* strategy. Members discussed the 46 initiatives across nine strategic pillars, progress achieved during the 2025 foundational year, and key themes including enterprise-wide delivery, integration across faculties and divisions, resourcing challenges, and the role of digital platforms and artificial intelligence as strategic enablers.

Anti-racism and Anti-discrimination Workplan 2026

The Academic Board received a presentation on the Anti-racism and Anti-discrimination Workplan 2026. Members discussed findings from the Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Uni report and the University's planned response, including immediate actions, consultation activities and the development of a comprehensive Anti-Racism Plan by the end of 2026.

Discussion emphasised the importance of strengthening reporting processes, improving data collection, supporting diversity and inclusion initiatives, and fostering a culture of belonging across the University community.

Research Strategy and UNSW Missions Framework

Members received updates on research strategy developments, including outcomes from the 2026 URC-UHDRC Strategy Day and the newly proposed UNSW Missions Framework.

The presentation outlined a coordinated, challenge-led approach to addressing major societal issues through cross-University initiatives that bring together research, education, engagement and external partnerships. Members discussed governance arrangements, implementation principles, integration with existing research structures and alignment with national priorities.

Progress Partners Initiative

The Academic Board received a presentation on the new Progress Partners Initiative, designed to strengthen external engagement and societal impact through collaborative partnerships.

Members noted that the first Progress Challenge focuses on reducing the incidence of financial abuse experienced by vulnerable Australians and discussed opportunities to align the initiative with the emerging UNSW Missions framework.

Presentations and Reports

Flex-semester transition governance

The Academic Board received an update on governance arrangements supporting the University's transition to a flex-semester academic calendar.

Members discussed program and course redesign timelines, governance pathways and implementation planning across faculties and divisions. The Academic Board approved temporary amendments to academic governance processes for 2026 and 2027 to facilitate the timely approval of routine course revisions while maintaining appropriate academic oversight.

UNSW College Strategy Update 2026

The Academic Board received a presentation on the UNSW College Strategy 2026. Members discussed the growth of the College as an independently registered higher education provider, its expanding transnational education network and increasing pathway opportunities for domestic and international students.

The presentation highlighted new degree programs approved by TEQSA, growth in domestic student enrolments and the strategic contribution of UNSW College to student access, participation and University priorities.

Lifelong Learning Annual Report 2025

The Academic Board noted the Lifelong Learning Annual Report 2025 and ongoing efforts to support professional education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Annual Reports of Committees of the Academic Board and University Committees, 2025

The Academic Board noted the 2025 annual reports of its committees and University Committees.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Standing Reports

The Academic Board noted reports from the DVC, Academic Quality, the DVC, Education & Student Experience, and the DVC, Research & Enterprise.

Members received updates on student recruitment, employability outcomes, Open Day activities in Bengaluru, food security initiatives and the exploration of future learning management system investments.

The Academic Board also noted positive outcomes in student experience surveys, including improvements in student belonging and satisfaction. Updates were provided on the proposed simplification of University guidance regarding the use of artificial intelligence in assessment activities.

Research updates highlighted strong performance in knowledge exchange and industry engagement, developments arising from the national research policy environment and future grant program considerations.

Policies and Procedures

Research Withdrawal Grade

The Academic Board endorsed the introduction of a new Research Withdrawal (RW) grade within the Assessment and Progression Policy. The grade will be used where higher degree research candidates permanently discontinue their candidature in their final term of enrolment.

Policy Transformation Program

Members received an update on the Policy Transformation Program, and noted recently approved and published policies and procedures.

Academic Offerings – Faculties and Board of Studies

The Academic Board approved the following new and revised academic programs and specialisations across several faculties:

Arts, Design & Architecture

Postgraduate – Program Revision

1. 8233 Master of International Relations

Engineering

Postgraduate – Specialisation Revisions

2. MTRNFS Robotics (8338)
3. MTRNGS Robotics (5373)
4. MTRNHS Robotics (7373)

Medicine & Health

Undergraduate – Program Revisions

5. 3181 Bachelor of Vision Science
6. 3805 Bachelor of Medical Studies/Doctor of Medicine
7. 3831 Bachelor of Science (Medicine) Honours
8. 3890 Bachelor of Applied Exercise Science
9. 3891 Bachelor of Nutrition
10. 3892 Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Medicine
11. 3893 Bachelor of Exercise Science

Undergraduate – Double Degree Revision

12. 3182 Bachelor of Vision Science/Master of Clinical Optometry

Postgraduate – Program Revisions

13. 8095 Master of Clinical Optometry
14. 9066 Master of Dietetics and Food Innovation
15. 9067 Master of Pharmacy
16. 9068 Master of Physiotherapy and Exercise Physiology
17. 9069 Master of Clinical Exercise Physiology

Undergraduate – Specialisation Revisions

18. NEURA1 Neuroscience (Advanced Science)
19. NEURB1 Neurobiology
20. NEURS1 Neuroscience
21. PATHA1 Pathology
22. PATHB1 Pathology (Advanced Science)
23. PATHC1 Human Pathology
24. PHSLA1 Physiology
25. PHSLB1 Physiology (Advanced Science)
26. PHSLC1 Medical Physiology

Honours – Specialisation Revisions

27. MDCNAH Clinical Artificial Intelligence
28. MDCNBH Clinical Artificial Intelligence (Extended Research)
29. MDCNCH Medicine (Extended Research)
30. MDCNDH Microbiology (Extended Research)
31. MDCNEH Genetics (Extended Research)
32. MDCNFH Psychiatry (Extended Research)
33. MDCNGH Surgery (Extended Research)
34. MDCNHH Medical Education (Extended Research)
35. MDCNIH Dermatology (Extended Research)
36. MDCNJH Rural and Remote Medicine (Extended Research)
37. MDCNKH Emergency Medicine (Extended Research)
38. MDCNLH Anaesthetics (Extended Research)
39. MDCNMH Pain Medicine (Extended Research)
40. MDCNNH Intensive Care Medicine (Extended Research)
41. MDCNOH General Practice (Extended Research)

42. MDCNPH Paediatrics and Child Health (Extended Research)
43. MDCNQH Palliative Medicine (Extended Research)
44. MDCNRH Addiction Medicine (Extended Research)
45. MDCNSH Sexual Health Medicine (Extended Research)
46. MDCNTH Ophthalmology (Extended Research)
47. MDCNUH Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Extended Research)
48. MDCNVH Radiology (Extended Research)
49. MDCNWH Medical Administration (Extended Research)
50. MDCNXH Rehabilitation Medicine (Extended Research)
51. MDCNYH Occupational and Environmental Medicine (Extended Research)
52. PHCMAH Infectious Disease (Extended Research)
53. PHCMBH Public Health Medicine (Extended Research)
54. PHCMCH Environmental Health Data Science
55. SOMSGH Anatomy (Extended Research)
56. SOMSHH Pathology (Extended Research)
57. SOMSIH Pharmacology (Extended Research)
58. SOMSJH Physiology (Extended Research)
59. SOMSKH Sports and Exercise (Extended Research)

The Academic Board also noted the disestablishment/suspension of selected Business and Engineering specialisations and majors.

Other Business

The Academic Board noted the 2026 UNSW Council Staff and Student Election schedule, the governance approval timelines for 2027 academic offerings and the proposed 2026 meeting dates.

The meeting also acknowledged:

- The passing of valued members of the UNSW community, Martin Healy and Emma Johnston AO
- National honours and awards received by members of the UNSW community
- The naming of Professor Henry Brodaty AO as the 2026 Senior Australian of the Year
- The conferral of Emeritus and Chancellor Emeritus titles on distinguished members of the University community.

Disclaimer

This report summarises the key themes and decisions of the meeting. It is not a complete record of proceedings and neither includes all matters discussed nor the full detail of decisions. Some matters may be omitted to protect confidentiality.

Further Information

Further information on UNSW governance, including Academic Board functions, membership and committees, is available through the University's Governance website:

[Governance](#)

[Academic Board | Governance – UNSW Sydney](#)

[Academic Board membership](#)