

Academic Standards Framework

(As approved by 20/5 Academic Board on 11 November 2020 – AB/20-5/85; amended under Delegation 3.14.2 on 24 February 2022; minor updates on 16 June 2025)

Purpose

1. The Academic Standards Framework (the framework) guides the standards for UTS's activities and its alignment to the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (HESF 2021) to effectively achieve desired academic outcomes in line with the UTS 2030 strategy.
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

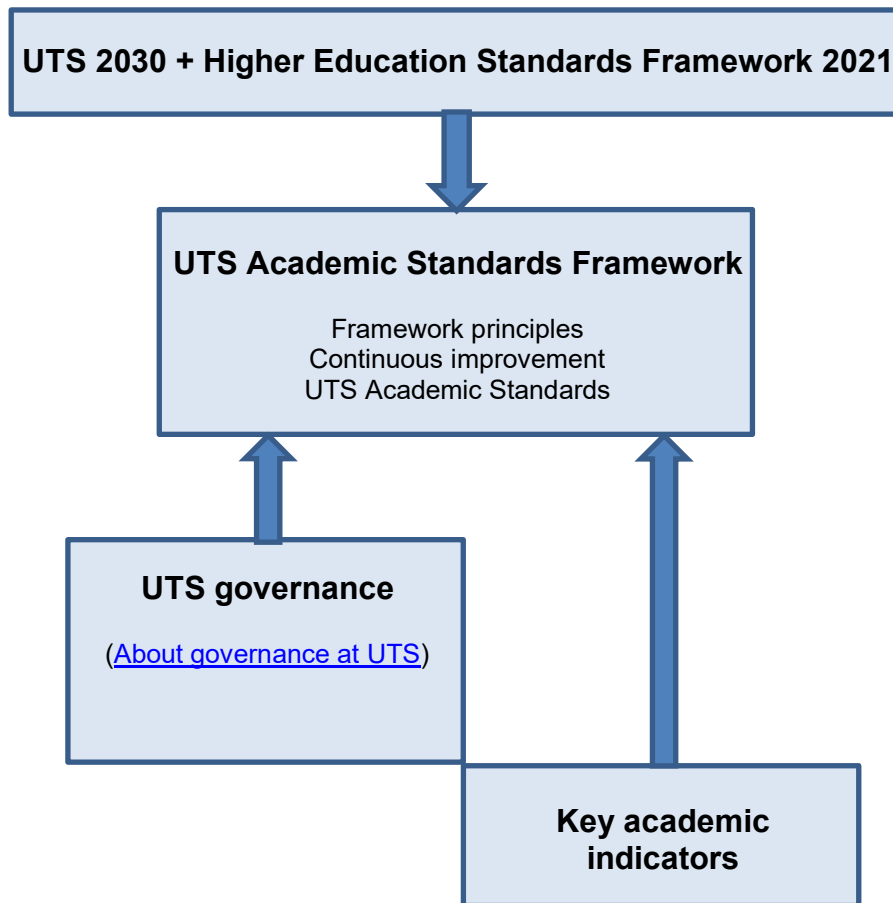
3. The framework is relevant to:
 - a. Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards), and
 - b. all staff and students.
4. The framework covers all areas of academic activities, including:
 - a. student participation and attainment
 - b. learning environment
 - c. teaching
 - d. research
 - 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](#), UTS's [Continuous improvement](#) approach and the [UTS Academic Standards](#) guide UTS's approach to quality assurance, quality improvement and, therefore, UTS's alignment to the [HESF 2021](#).

Framework flowchart

6. The flowchart shows the interrelationship 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 2030 strategy
 - predicated on achieving high quality outcomes for students, research partners, 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 commitment to the purpose of the university and its committees
 - underpinned by UTS's principles of integrity
 - aligned with UTS's risk management principles, and
 - well measured and informed, with transparent decision-making in line with UTS accountability systems.

Continuous improvement

8. UTS uses a continuous improvement approach for quality in processes at UTS. It involves a series of systematic and continuous actions leading to improvements. Refer [Quality and standards](#) and [UTS Annual Plan](#) (SharePoint).

UTS Academic Standards

9. UTS Academic Standards ([Appendix 1](#)) are the objectives against which performance of academic activities is 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 [UTS Act and By-law](#), the [UTS Rules](#) and [Policies](#) ensure appropriate strategic and operational oversight of the quality and standards of UTS's academic activities.
12. Responsible officers identified in the standards ([Appendix 1](#)) are delegated authority under the [UTS Delegations](#) to undertake relevant academic processes in line with relevant policies and procedures to ensure academic standards are met.

Role of Academic Board in planning for and improving standards

13. As per its functions and powers defined in [Division 3, Rule G3](#) of 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 and research training). Academic Board reports to and advises Council and the Vice-Chancellor on the quality, standards and benchmarks appropriate to all aspects of UTS's academic work.
14. Academic Board uses a range of mechanisms and tools to achieve continuous improvement, including but not limited to:
 - a. alignment of terms of reference of Academic Board and its committees with the [HESF 2021](#) 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 the UTS 2030 strategy, and is strengthened by a university-wide governance framework (of delegations, rules, policies, procedures and governance principles, supported by local level guidelines), and annual reporting on forward plans. Forward plans should be based on the 3 key areas that are 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 2030 strategy and the 3 key areas of academic strategy, academic quality and academic risk
 - d. an advisory committee (Executive Committee of Academic Board (ECAB)) to support the business of Academic Board and ensure quality interaction between the board and its committees
 - e. Academic Board surveys (biennial for members of the board and its committees, and quadrennial for stakeholders) to assess the effectiveness of the board and its committees and recommend necessary improvements
 - f. regular reviews:
 - annual self-assessment of terms of reference and composition of Academic Board committees
 - ad hoc 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 Academic Board attending Council meetings)
 - University Leadership Team
 - Academic Board committees including faculty boards ('feedback from Academic Board' is a standing item on the agenda)
 - Vice-Chancellor/Provost's feedback to the Chair of Academic Board
 - briefings of student members of Academic Board by the Chair
 - faculty board visits by the Chair and Deputy Chair of 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 UTS Annual Plan and ongoing 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 Internal Audit Director
 - b. risk assessments, reviews and process improvement activities administered by the Director, Risk, and
 - c. management reviews overseen and evaluated by the University Leadership Team.

Framework ownership and support

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

Appendix 1: UTS Academic Standards

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross 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 (Education and Students) Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion Executive Director, Lifetime Learner Experience Unit Director, UTS International Deans Responsible academic officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions outcomes (for example, 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 and Recognition of Prior Learning

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
1.6 UTS encourages and supports a diverse student population		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion • All staff and students 		2.2 Diversity and Equity
2. Courses				
2.1 UTS courses are consistent with the UTS 2030 strategy and relevant university strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and academic work planning • Initial strategic assessment • Course planning • Industry advisory boards • Industry consultation • Course accreditation/review • Subject approval • Course/subject preparation and delivery • UTS course performance reporting • Course experience questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards) • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) • Deans, associate deans (teaching and learning) and institute and centre directors • Manager, University Academic Programs Office • Manager, Higher Education Language and Presentation Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculties implement course plan that aligns with strategy • UTS accreditation • Professional accreditation • Reputation with industry and the professions (UTS KPI) • Graduate satisfaction • Industry/profession satisfaction • Student success • Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course • Learning outcomes 	
2.2 UTS courses meet relevant regulatory and professional accreditation requirements				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				
2.4 At UTS, each course has a course-specific graduate profile, which reflects UTS's vision and the related professions and disciplines. Accordingly, to qualify for a UTS award, a student must				1.2 Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
undertake a specified minimum amount of study in that course at UTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Satisfaction Survey• UTS Model of Learning• Graduate attributes• Diversity guidelines for courses and subjects• Staff recruitment, induction and development			
2.5 UTS students have the opportunity to complement their learning with academic and personal support and development programs, including specific programs for students at academic risk				1.3 Orientation and Progression 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support 4.2 Research Training
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)• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student retention• Student success• Student satisfaction with subjects (UTS KPI) and course• Assessment report• Student misconduct	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				1.3 Orientation and Progression

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
appropriate to the course's graduate attributes and subject's learning outcomes	•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, Teaching Learning and Curriculum Unit• Director, Student Administration• Deans, associate deans (teaching and learning) and institute and centre directors• Responsible academic officers, subject coordinators and appointed assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning outcome	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
4. Research				
4.1 UTS research is consistent with UTS 2030 strategy and relevant university strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research activities• Communication strategies• Publications for various audiences• Research education• Researcher development• Academic work planning• Research strategic planning and alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards)• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)• Director, Research Office• Deans, associate deans (research) and institute and centre directors• Manager, Research Integrity and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each faculty and centre has implemented a research plan that aligns to the UTS Research Strategy• Facilities allocated• Impact metrics for faculty, research strength and university• Research leadership index• Number of weighted publications (total and	
4.2 UTS seeks external research collaboration, including working with industry and the professions in research development				
4.3 UTS staff have, and maintain, the necessary disciplinary and research methodologies to effectively conduct research				3.2 Staffing 4.1 Research 4.2 Research Training 6.3 Academic Governance

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes to develop high quality applications aligned with UTS strategy Research facilities management Development and supervision of doctoral study plans 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> per full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff) Total research income from all Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) reported categories 	
5. Learning environment				
5.1 Student 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) Academic Board and its committees Chief Operating Officer Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Deans Director, Teaching Learning and Curriculum Unit Director, Property Unit Chief Information Officer 	<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"> Student success Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course 	2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
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 UTS planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UTS accreditation Professional accreditation Reputation with industry and the professions (UTS KPI) 	1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement
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"> Course Experience Questionnaire Student Satisfaction Survey Review and improvements cycles Academic Quality and Standards Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deans, associate deans (teaching and learning) and institute and centre directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student success Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course 	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 Act and By-law, UTS Rules, Delegations and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council and its committees Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards) University Secretary and Director, Governance Support 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 	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				6.3 Academic Governance
7.3 UTS academic standards apply to activities undertaken with other parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elections Assurance mapping Induction/education programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Student Services Unit 		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 cross reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UTS Risk Management Policy and Procedure • UTS Risk Taxonomy • Faculty and business unit risk assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion • Director, Risk • Internal Audit Director 	and student participation	
7.4 UTS staff, students and researchers appropriately protect UTS intellectual property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research activities • Research management • 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"> • Deans, and institute and centre directors • Research integrity advisers • Responsible academic officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the Intellectual Property Policy • Compliance with the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Policy • Impact metrics for faculty, centres and university • Research leadership index • Number of weighted publications • Number of weighted publications per FTE academic staff • Total research income from all HERDC reported categories 	4.1 Research 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity
7.5 UTS protects and promotes intellectual freedom				6.1 Corporate Governance
7.6 UTS staff and students are expected to maintain a high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student education on academic integrity — online and workshops 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with academic integrity framework 	4.1 Research

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
level of academic and research integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic misconduct procedures • Appeals and complaints procedures • Policies on student complaints • Guidelines for Research Integrity Breaches 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment report 	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"> • 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