

UTS Council meeting report

15 October 2025

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 15 October 2025 meeting.

**The Report structure replicates the flow of the agenda.*

Strategic items of business

Organisational Sustainability Initiative (OSI)

Council was advised by the Chancellor that a meeting had been held on 13 October to discuss the Alternate Proposal with a number of people in attendance including the authors of the Proposal. It was noted that the Finance Committee had previously reviewed the Alternate Proposal at its September meeting, as outlined in its report.

The October 13 discussion explored the underlying assumptions of both the University's Academic Change Proposal and the Alternate Proposal, including revenue forecasts, expense trajectories, balance sheet impacts, and capital expenditure commitments.

During the discussion at the Council meeting a number of matters were raised by Council members including concern about the velocity of the proposed change and its potential psychosocial and cultural impacts. These concerns were acknowledged but the need for timely action given the uncertainty facing the higher education sector was also noted.

The Council discussion acknowledged that both proposals require significant judgement, particularly in balancing financial sustainability with strategic priorities. It was reaffirmed that the Academic Change Proposal reflects a strategic and adaptive response to sector wide challenges, aimed at aligning the University's cost base with revenue expectations.

Student Centred Digital Learning and Innovation

Council was briefed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) on the University's progress toward a student-centred digital learning and innovation model.

Council acknowledged the urgency of this transformation in light of global shifts in higher education, including global competition, shifting student expectations, technological disruption, and increasing demands for graduate employability. The model is a key pillar of the forthcoming Digital UTS Strategy to 2030 and aims to deliver flexible, inclusive, and personalised learning experiences that uphold academic integrity and prepare students for success in a digitally driven world.

Knowledge Exchange

Council was briefed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Engagement & Partnerships) on the progress of the Knowledge Exchange (KE) approach and its implementation.

Council noted that the KE Framework is central to UTS's ambition to be a partner of choice in delivering impact, aligning three major streams — Research Translation, Deep Sector Engagement, and the Industry Partnership Model — to drive institutional and societal benefit.

Council affirmed that the KE Framework provides a robust structure for aligning institutional levers and delivering public and commercial value and will continue to provide strategic oversight as the Framework is further implemented and refined.

Cybersecurity Update

Council noted that the threat landscape for the higher education sector remains high, with ongoing developments in cyber-attack campaigns, techniques, threat actor behaviours, criminal market structures, and the University's ongoing vulnerabilities to these activities.

Council questioned the specific vulnerabilities facing UTS. Management advised that vigilance is required across all university operations. It was emphasised that cybersecurity risks must be actively treated and managed at all levels, with a proactive approach to identifying and addressing areas of exposure.

In conclusion, Council noted the investments and progress that had been made in strengthening the University's resilience to cyber-attack since 2021 and the need to continue prioritising investment in this area.

Operations and performance

Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provides a report to each Council meeting containing updates on key developments and events that have occurred since Council's last meeting. Updates include; the implementation progress of the UTS Strategy, State and Federal Government issues, updates regarding the university sector and internal matters, particularly achievements and awards.

The Vice-Chancellor, through his report, updated Council on funding arrangements with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is introducing a new Managed Growth Funding System (MGFS) from 2026 to better support domestic and international tertiary education students through updated funding and allocation processes, managed by the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC).

Council noted that the University has been ranked 7th in Australia and 145th globally in the 2026 Times Higher Education World University Rankings. It was further noted that these results are based on data from 2023 and therefore reflect past performance. The Vice-Chancellor extended congratulations to the academic community, acknowledging their dedication and contributions in achieving this outcome.

Health Safety and Wellbeing Standing Report

Council noted the notifications to SafeWork.

Council was advised that the Audit and Risk Committee receives regular reporting on these issues. In addition, the Internal Audit function has enhanced its capabilities to assess psychosocial risks. Management is actively strengthening its psychosocial support framework to ensure staff wellbeing is prioritised.

Reports from committees

Council has a number of committees, whose membership have particular expertise, to provide assistance and advice to Council on matters for Council consideration. These committees report back to Council.

Report from Finance Committee

The Finance Committee advises Council on matters relating to the distribution and supervision of university finances, and acts on behalf of Council in areas of delegated authority.

Council noted the University's financial performance, the discussions at the Committee's meeting regarding the Alternate Proposal and reports from Controlled Entities.

Council approved changes to the Treasury and Investments Policy and Debt Refinancing Strategy.

Report from Governance Committee

The primary responsibility of the Governance Committee is to assist Council in regards to policy, general governance specified risk matters.

Council considered the proposed changes to the Delegations of Authority, which are intended to reallocate responsibilities should the Provost role be disestablished. The date of effect of the proposed changes should they proceed will be determined, as approved by Council, by the Vice-Chancellor.

Council approved the proposed amendments to the Competitive Neutrality and Pricing Policy and the Commercial Activities Management Procedure.

Report from Academic Board

Council noted Academic Board had received the Report from Student Members which highlighted the impact of course pauses on students and staff across the University. The Report raised concerns around the lack of clarity regarding the future of these courses which risks creating disruption for incoming students and external stakeholders, as well as for current students and staff. The Student Report emphasised the need for clear and timely communication in order to minimise further disruption and support the university community during this period of transition.

Council members noted in response to the Student Report, that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) reported that she had written to all coursework

students to explain the impacts of the Academic Change Proposal on students, while the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) had written to all HDR students. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) advised that there is a designated email address for coursework and research student feedback and noted that all student feedback would be considered in parallel to staff feedback received. She also reported that a list of all courses affected by OSI had been provided to students and a list of all affected subjects was also being provided to the student cohort.

Items for approval

- Appointment of Council Members
- Appointment of Committee Chair

Council discussed the appointment of Members and the tenure of appointments.

The Chair also acknowledged that Council members serve on a voluntary basis and that efforts to fill vacant positions are ongoing.

Items for noting

Council is provided papers for noting and include activity that has occurred between Council meetings.

- Chancellor's Report
 - Use of Power of Attorney, University Seal and Executive Action
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Items of General Business

None

Other reports

- Interim Student Load Report
- Report from Audit and Risk Committee
- Approval of the Final Committee Dates for 2026