



OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 4, 2024 – 26 SEPTEMBER

Deakin University Council met on 26 September 2024 at the Geelong Waterfront Campus and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2024 business schedule.

Setting the strategic direction of the University

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor on matters of University-wide importance, including:

- student enrolment numbers, noting specific factors affecting movements domestically and internationally, but that overall application and enrolment levels remain in line with planning for 2024 and 2025
- the Commonwealth Government's plans for capping the number of new international student commencements for the higher education sector. The cap for Deakin is close to our 2019 and 2023 international student commencements and is in line with financial and operational plans for 2025
- the 'Closing the Loopholes' legislation, particularly in relation to Academic staff and the University's comprehensive program for implementing requirements of the new legislation
- Deakin and other universities' involvement in the Senate Committee Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill
- the introduction into the Commonwealth parliament of a Bill to establish an independent National Student Ombudsman to investigate student complaints and resolve disputes with universities.

External landscape – Strategic considerations for 2025-2027

Council continued the in-depth discussion it had at its last meeting on the confluence of regulatory and policy developments which are profoundly reshaping the higher education landscape in Australia, specifically in regard to funding.

The Vice-Chancellor briefed Council on budget strategy and the principles that will underpin the University's Financial Plan 2025-2027. The full Financial Plan will be presented to its next meeting on 8 November 2024.

Overseeing the management and control of finances and major projects and initiatives

Finances

Council considered a report and presentation from the Chief Financial Officer on financial performance to 31 August 2024. This period incorporates Outlook 2 which provides a sound outlook towards the end of year position. Council noted that financial performance to 31 August 2024 is consistent with the Financial Plan.

Audited Financial Statements – International Branch Campus GIFT City India

Council considered and approved resolutions regarding the audited Financial Statements 2023-2024 for the GIFT City International Branch Campus, in accordance with regulatory requirements in India.

Investments

Council considered a report from the Investment Committee on implementation and oversight of the University's Responsible Investment Strategy and the Committee's scrutiny of specific investment sectors including alternative debt, fixed interest and cash and cash equivalents.

Major projects report

Council considered the Major Projects Report including updates on the Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH) and the International Branch Campuses at GIFT City, India and Bandung, Indonesia.

Council noted an upcoming change request for the Streamline project, where the scope is being refined to align more efficiently with other digital projects, and the upcoming major project on the Student Management System, currently in discovery stage.

Ongoing major program on carbon neutrality

At its previous meeting on 1 August Council approved the updating and refreshing of the University's commitment to carbon neutrality and full decarbonisation. This had regard to recent developments in carbon neutrality scope reporting and benchmarking against best industry and university sector practice.

At this meeting Council approved a change request to revise the scope and budget for the Carbon Neutral 2025 Built Environment Program (CN2025).

For future meetings Council will continue to receive reports on the CN2025 project at each meeting, augmented by six monthly reports on the progress of the University's comprehensive decarbonisation strategy.

Overseeing and monitoring of academic activities

Academic Board

Council considered a report from the Chair of the Academic Board on the Board's two recent meetings.

Council expressed its appreciation of the Chair's comprehensive report covering a range of academic governance matters.

Council welcomed the Chair's initiative to invite the input of external experts into the Board's upcoming scheduled self-review. The individuals concerned are extremely well credentialed and their input will add value to the review and further weight to the University's academic quality assurance arrangements.

Council also noted the establishment of a dedicated Working Group to advise the Academic Board on the International Branch Campus in Bandung and to take forward the good foundational work to establish the policy framework for courses to be offered at that campus in association with the University of Lancaster.

University rankings

Council was delighted that Deakin, in the 2024 *Scholar GPS Rankings*, achieved seventh place in Australia overall for academic institutions in the most recent five-year evaluation period. This was an increase from a full lifetime position of 14th place. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that this growth was significant and was unmatched by other Australian universities.

Deakin also maintained its national rank of 11th place and as third in Victoria in the 2024 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU).

Institute Annual Reports

Council received the 2023 annual report of the National Indigenous Knowledges Education Research and Innovation (NIKERI) Institute, Applied Artificial Intelligence Institute (A²I²) and the Institute for Health Transformation (IHT).

Overseeing risk management and monitoring systems of control and accountability

Council considered reports on the Audit and Risk Committee's work on reviewing an extensive range of internal audit, financial audit strategy, health safety and wellbeing, TEQSA and risk and compliance matters.

The Chair emphasised that the Committee thoroughly reviewed the reports and findings of each audit and noted that management had already taken action in response to many of their recommendations.

Council noted that a new integrated training module on declarations of interest is in development. It will also cover gift acceptance. It will be a compulsory module for all staff and will assist staff members and team leaders to deal with declarations in an objective, comprehensive and constructive manner.

University policy – intellectual property and commercialisation

Council approved amendments to the Intellectual Property Policy and Commercial Activities and Entities Policy and Procedure. The amendments provide clarifications regarding the commercialisation of intellectual property and returns to inventors, consistent with the principles of the existing policy but and incorporating recommendations of recent audits and the 2023 review of commercialisation activities. They are published on the University's [Policy Library](#).

University elections

Council noted the outcomes from recent university elections to the Council, the Academic Board and Faculty Boards.

Council thanked staff and students for their participation in the elections.

In terms of Council positions there was no election for the elected staff member on Council this year. Deakin Distinguished Professor Catherine Bennett is the elected staff member of Council with a term until 31 December 2026.

The elected student member of Council for 2025 (one year term) is Paulasta (Paul) Majumdar, a Bachelor of Biomedical Science (3rd year in 2025). Council congratulated Paul on his election.

Disclaimer: This report provides an overview for the University community of the Council's decisions and actions at the relevant meeting. It is not intended to cover every decision made at the meeting or the full detail of decisions and discussions.

Inquiries and requests for further information can be directed to the University Council Secretary on council-secretary@deakin.edu.au.