Academic Promotions Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative – Academic Board
Accountable Executive – Policy	Vice-Chancellor
Responsible Manager – Policy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Review Date	20 February 2028

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Policy informs prospective applicants about how La Trobe recognises and rewards the achievements of academic staff by providing promotion pathways.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all academic staff employed at La Trobe University whether full time or part time, fixed-term or continuing, academic practitioners, and those with joint appointments who seek promotion to:

a. Level B (Lecturer; Research Fellow)
b. Level C (Senior Lecturer; Senior Research Fellow)
c. Level D (Associate Professor; or Principal Research Fellow and Associate Professor)
d. Level E (Professor)

(3) This Policy does not apply to casual or sessional academic staff, clinical practitioners, or recent professional practice employees.

(4) Applicants for promotion should normally have held an academic position at La Trobe for a minimum of one year prior to seeking promotion.

(5) Fixed-term staff are eligible to apply for promotion but if a promotion is granted it will not extend a fixed-term appointment.

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Reviewing applications for promotion to Level B and Level C and providing recommendations.	Level B/C Academic Promotions Committee
Reviewing applications for promotion to Level D and Level E and providing recommendations.	Level D/E Academic Promotions Committee

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Key Decisions	Role
Approving or not approving the recommendations of the Academic Promotions Committees.	Vice-Chancellor

Section 5 - Policy Statement

Principles

(6) La Trobe seeks to attract, retain and develop very high quality staff to achieve the University's strategic goals. As part of this commitment, it seeks to encourage, by way of promotion, those members of academic staff who demonstrate outstanding qualities in performing their responsibilities.

(7) The University will recognise and reward sustained academic excellence through a transparent and consistent process of promotion. Promotion will be awarded based on evidence of the quality and impact of contributions to the University's strategic goals at the academic level sought in each of the domains:

a. teaching
b. research and/or scholarship of learning and teaching as appropriate; and
c. service

(8) Where an academic appointment specifically precludes or constrains contribution to one of these domains (for example, research-only positions), the application will be judged against the relevant domains of contribution.

(9) Academic promotion at La Trobe University will be based on the following principles:

a. Criteria will be consistent with the criteria for selection and probationary review and the University's Performance and Development (Career Success) Procedure, including La Trobe's commitment to its cultural qualities and values.
b. Equality of opportunity forms the basis of conferring all forms of employment benefits at the University including promotion. The University values the diversity in its academic workforce.
c. Academic staff will be provided with appropriate advice and support in the preparation of applications and will receive clear and timely feedback on the outcomes.
d. Applications will be assessed on the evidence provided about the quality, outcomes and impact of contributions holistically across domains.
e. Assessment will be based on demonstrated performance, relative to opportunity. Applications from under-represented groups will be actively encouraged.
f. Evidence will be assessed over an academic staff member's entire career, however more significance will be placed on achievements, outputs and impact in the period since last promotion or appointment to the current academic level.
g. Applications will be judged on their merit, there are no quotas on the number of staff promoted annually. In the case of a successful promotion outcome, it is the responsibility of the relevant academic unit to fund the salary costs. This also applies to staff holding research-only positions, whose salaries are usually provided by external funding bodies.
h. All staff involved in promotion processes will uphold the principles of confidentiality and privacy.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Domains of Academic Work

(10) Applicants will demonstrate high levels of performance and achievement (relative to opportunity), appropriate to academic level, disciplinary field, type of appointment and agreed work plan, in the following three domains of academic work:

a. teaching;
b. research and/or scholarship of learning and teaching as appropriate; and
c. service.

(11) It is expected that sustained performance and achievements are demonstrated at a level commensurate with the Minimum Standards for Academic Levels for the academic level sought.

(12) For the purposes of this Policy, teaching activity includes but is not limited to:

a. creating and evaluating innovative and inclusive teaching, assessment and curriculum design strategies that are informed by research and supported by evidence of outcomes and impact on student learning
b. developing effective learning environments, student support and guidance
c. effective adoption and evaluation of technologies to enhance the student learning experience
d. assessing and giving feedback to students on their learning and learning support activities
e. integration of scholarship, discipline research and professional learning activities
f. demonstrated leadership in teaching, curriculum development, mentoring of teaching staff, and/or learning and teaching policy and strategy
g. contribution to quality teaching culture
h. securing internal or external grants to support instructional activities.

(13) Research activity includes but is not limited to:

a. production of quality research publications and other outputs, including contract research reports, patents and creative works, with demonstrated indicators of esteem
b. securing internal and external research funding
c. demonstrated research impact and/or demonstrated research engagement
d. research leadership and mentoring
e. contribution to research culture
f. honours and graduate research supervision
g. effective development and management of partnerships with industry, government, business or community groups to support research and/or knowledge transfer.

(14) Scholarship of learning and teaching which may be evidenced by:

a. educational research and scholarly activity, including journal publications and conference presentations;
b. securing teaching related research funding;
c. scholarly and innovative teaching practice and contribution to curriculum development;
d. contribution to professional bodies or communities of practice;
e. involvement in scholarly academic societies, editorial roles or peer review.

(15) For further information, please refer to the Academic Promotions Intranet.

(16) Service activity includes but is not limited to:

a. contribution to academic governance, leadership and University policy, which may include representation on committees/working groups and/or formal leadership positions at Course, Department, Research Centre, School, regional and/or University levels
b. mentoring, supporting and managing the development and performance of other staff
c. leadership and contribution to academic activities, including committees, forums, professional development, seminars, and networks
d. contributions to the profession/discipline, including professional organisations within the discipline, journal reviewing and editorial functions
e. engagement with industry, government, business and the broader community that aligns with La Trobe's strategic goals and has demonstrable, sustained impact
f. demonstrated high standards of professional behaviour consistent with the University's Cultural Qualities.

Part B - Basis for Promotion

(17) Promotion is based on:

a. the applicant's qualifications and/or experience;
b. evidence (see Definitions) of achievement in the domains of academic activity: teaching, research/SOLT and service, as appropriate with respect to the type of employment and agreed work plan;
c. confirmation from the applicant's Career Success Manager/Academic Reviewer that the applicant has demonstrated a level of achievement and performance that is appropriate to their existing academic level.

(18) In addition to the above, consideration is also given to the following:

a. the appropriate balance of performance and outcomes in disciplines and professions where there is a greater reliance on current professional practice;
b. joint appointments with partner institutions or industry;
c. performance relative to opportunity and recognition of interrupted careers and fractional appointments due to family commitments (e.g. primary carer for children, elder-care, illness of a partner or dependant), ill health or disability where a case is explicitly made to the Academic Promotions Committee with the application.

(19) Applicants must provide supporting evidence for any claims made in their application, in accordance with the Instructions for Applicants available on the Academic Promotions Intranet.

Qualifications and/or Relevant Experience

(20) Applicants for promotion must hold a relevant doctorate or possess and demonstrate equivalent qualifications and experience.

(21) The Committee will, in the context of the level for which promotion is applied, consider the appropriateness of levels and types of formal qualifications and/or substantial progress towards such qualifications or, where relevant consider and determine the equivalence of alternative qualifications and/or experience held by applicants.

Preparing and Lodging the Application

(22) Applicants will assess whether they are eligible for promotion and merit promotion with reference to the Minimum Standards for Academic Levels and the Academic Performance Framework.

(23) Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek guidance and discuss their application with the following before making an application for promotion:

a. Career Success Manager/Academic Reviewer/Head of Department
b. Dean/Director of Centre/Institute
c. an academic mentor

(24) The Academic Promotions Committee will convene once per year to consider applications. The dates of Academic Promotions Committees' meetings and the cut-off dates for inclusion in those meetings will be published on the Academic Promotions Intranet at the start of the calendar year.

(25) Applications not submitted or incomplete by the cut-off date for a meeting of the Academic Promotions Committeewill be held over to the next meeting. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Chair.

(26) Applicants must follow the "Instructions for Applicants" and submit applications electronically via the Academic Promotions link that will be available on the Internal Jobs intranet page. The submission must include:

a. completed Academic Promotions Application Form
b. CV in the standardised format, available on the Academic Promotions Intranet
c. all supporting documents as required by the "Instructions for Applicants".

(27) Applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgement once their application has been lodged.

Part C - Referee and External Assessor Reports

Table 1: Summary of Referee and Assessor Requirements, by Academic Level

Promotion to level	Applicant's self-nominated Referees	Independent External Assessors, nominated by Dean	Sign off on application
Level B	1 or 2 required (may be internal or external to La Trobe)	Not required	Dean
Level C	2 or 3 required (at least one must be external to La Trobe)	Not required	Dean
Level D	2 required (at least one must be external to La Trobe)	1 required	Dean
Level E	2 required (at least one must be external to La Trobe)	2 required	Dean

Dean (or equivalent) Report

(28) It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a report from their Dean (or equivalent) prior to submitting their application.

(29) The applicant should provide the Dean with their completed application, at least five weeks prior to the closing date for applications.

(30) If the applicant does not complete the above steps within the required timeframe, it will be at the Dean's discretion as to whether the report:

a. can be completed by the required deadline; or

b. whether the applicant will be delayed in lodging an application until the next round.

(31) The Dean will:

a. consult as appropriate with the applicant's Career Success Manager and other senior academic members of the University (in confidence) regarding the applicant's performance in relation to the context of their appointment;
b. verify the application and supporting documents;
c. prepare the Dean Report using the prescribed template. The report should:
    i. confirm the veracity and merits of the application and supporting documents;
    ii. indicate whether performance goals have been met;
d. ensure that comments in the report are evidence based and include input from the Career Success Manager and/or Academic Reviewer
e. sign the Dean Report and select the appropriate checkbox on the report template ('I do support the application' / 'I do not support the application');
f. discuss the completed report with the applicant. Applicants may provide a response (up to a one page) to the Dean Report in the form of a rejoinder;
g. normally complete their report within four weeks from receipt of application to enable the applicant to submit their application, including the Dean Report, on time;
h. provide, in confidence, the names and contact details of Independent External Assessors for applicants to Level D and E only (See Table 1).

(32) The Dean may delegate to the Head of Department or the applicant's Career Success Manager and/or Academic Reviewer as appropriate to draft the Dean Report. The Dean is required to review and be accountable for the content of reports prepared by their delegate.

(33) The Dean Report will not be provided to assessors or referees during the promotions process.

Referee Reports

(34) All applicants will contact each of their academic/professional referees to request a referee report on their suitability for promotion. The referee report provides evidence to augment and support the applicant's case for promotion.

(35) Applicants will send the following documents to referees who have agreed to provide a referee report:

a. Completed Academic Promotion Application form
b. Curriculum Vitae (CV)
c. Supporting Evidence Document (if applicable)
d. Information for Referees (available on the Academic Promotions Intranet); and
e. Referee Report template (available on the Academic Promotions Intranet)

(36) The referee report is to be forwarded by the referee via email to: academic.reference@latrobe.edu.au by the application close date (as noted on the Academic Promotions Intranet).

(37) All applicants will provide the names and details of their referees with their application for promotion to enable the Executive Officer to identify any outstanding reports.

(38) The Executive Officer will advise the applicant if a referee report has not been received by the application close date. The applicant will need to follow up with their referee to ensure the report is provided.

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(39) Applicants must not nominate their Career Success Manager/Academic Reviewer or members of the Academic Promotions Committees as referees, but they are encouraged to seek advice from them regarding referee selection.

(40) Academic referees must be at or above the level for which the applicant is seeking promotion. Professional or industry referees are expected to hold national standing or equivalent in the applicant's field of expertise.

(41) Applicants must declare any personal, familial or ongoing relationship with a referee when they submit their promotion application.

(42) After the outcome of the application is known the applicant (and/or their Dean) may be provided with copies of the referee reports if referees have agreed to make them available. Referees may elect not to make their report available to the applicant/Dean by indicating this in their report.

Independent External Assessors for Applications to Level D and E Only

(43) The role of independent external assessors is to provide an objective, expert and confidential assessment of claims of excellence made in the application in relation to teaching, research and service.

(44) The Dean is responsible for providing the names and contact details of assessors, as per the requirements specified in Table 1 above, and confirming that the assessors have agreed to provide a report.

(45) The Dean may discuss potential external assessors with the applicant, but the final selection will be provided by the Dean in confidence.

(46) In nominating independent external assessors the Dean will make every attempt to ensure that those persons are appropriately qualified to comment on the quality of the application and are independent. As a guideline, for assessors to be considered 'independent of the applicant' they should not have:

a. co-published with the applicant (Australian Research Council conflict of interest guidelines should be used as a reference in relation to this issue);
b. worked on a research grant with the applicant;
c. supervised the applicant as a PhD student or have been supervised by the applicant;
d. a close personal relationship or association; or
e. common business interests or other conflicts of interest.

(47) The nominated external assessors will normally be Level E. They will be experts of national or international standing within the relevant discipline and/or academic domain, and readily identified as distinguished leaders in their field.

(48) Where applicants do not want the Academic Promotions Committee to approach a particular assessor(s), they may inform the Dean when submitting their application, briefly outlining the reason for their request.

(49) The Executive Officer will contact external assessors by email to request Assessor Reports. Assessors will be sent copies of the Academic Promotion Application form, CV and Supporting Evidence Document, and La Trobe's Academic Promotions Policy. Assessors will be requested to provide their report within four weeks of receiving the request.

(50) After the outcome of the application is known the applicant (and/or their Dean) may be provided with copies of the assessor reports where assessors have agreed to make them available. Assessors may elect not to make their report to available to the applicant/Dean by indicating in their report.

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Part D - Academic Promotions Committees

(51) The Vice-Chancellor will appoint the Academic Promotions Committees.

(52) The Committees shall meet once per year.

(53) The term of membership of appointed members shall be three years and retiring members shall not be eligible for direct re- appointment. Retiring members may be eligible for a one year extension to their appointment.

(54) The Office of the Provost will provide administrative support to the Committees.

Membership of Academic Promotions Committees

(55) There will be two Academic Promotions Committees. Committee membership will depend on the academic level for which promotion is being sought.

(56) For promotion to academic Levels B and C, the Academic Promotions Committee will comprise:

a. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) as Chair (ex officio)
b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or nominee (ex officio)
c. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research) or nominee (ex officio)
d. Deputy Provost (ex officio)
e. Chair of Academic Board or nominee from the Academic Board membership (ex officio)
f. up to five academic members at Academic Level D or E nominated by the Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the Provost and Deans, selected to ensure expertise in teaching, academic service, and research; and a balance of broad disciplines, campuses and genders (appointed members)
g. Chief People Officer or nominee as a non-voting observer to provide advice at the request of the Committee (in attendance).

(57) For promotion to Academic Levels D and E, the Academic Promotions Committee will comprise:

a. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) as Chair (ex officio)
b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (ex officio)
c. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research) (ex officio)
d. Deputy Provost (ex officio)
e. Chair of Academic Board (ex officio)
f. up to five academic members at Academic Level E nominated by the Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the Provost and Deans, selected to ensure expertise in teaching, academic service, and research; and a balance of broad disciplines, campuses and genders (appointed members)
g. Chief People Officer or nominee as a non-voting observer to provide advice at the request of the Committee (in attendance)
h. One invited Level E academic who is external to La Trobe University (appointed member)

Assessment of Application

(58) The Academic Promotions Committees are deliberative committees that will base their decisions on the application provided, the case made by the applicant and the evidence provided to support the case. They will not take into account information that is known to the Committee, but which is not referred to and supported by evidence in the application. In addition to the views provided by the relevant Dean, referees and external assessors, the Committees will fulfill an important role in applying their expertise and bringing to bear a University-wide perspective,

to determine the outcome of an application. The Academic Promotions Committees reserve the right to seek additional information from applicants, assessors, referees or other internal or external advisors to assist them to make a decision about an application.

(59) Disciplinary differences will be taken into account and, where possible, the Committees will refer to appropriate disciplinary norms when assessing applications. If there are matters that require clarification, additional information may be sought by the Committees from the Dean or other appropriate senior person with a knowledge of a particular discipline or specialist area.

Approval Process

(60) The Academic Promotions Committees will provide recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor arising from each of their meetings.

(61) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving, or not approving, the recommendations of the Academic Promotions Committees.

(62) The Vice-Chancellor will report promotions to the Academic Board and the wider University community through All Staff communications.

Part E - Outcomes

Effective Date of Promotion and Salary Point

(63) Applicants will be advised in writing of a successful promotion outcome and the date from which the promotion will take effect.

(64) Promotion will be effective from the first of January in the year following the Academic Promotions Committee meeting at which the promotion was recommended.

(65) All promotions will be to the first salary point of the level to which the applicant is promoted, except where the employee is in receipt of a coordination responsibility payment to the promoted level, when they shall be appointed at the increment level required to ensure that they do not suffer any reduction in remuneration.

Unsuccessful Applicants

(66) Following the Vice-Chancellor's approval of the Academic Promotions Committee recommendations, the Executive Officer will advise unsuccessful applicants and the respective Dean in writing. In doing so the Executive Officer will invite the applicant to seek a meeting with the Chair or nominated member of the Academic Promotions Committee to discuss the outcome of their promotion application.

(67) The Dean (or equivalent) will meet with each unsuccessful applicant to provide information that would be useful for the future guidance of the applicant. Meetings for this purpose will take place as soon as possible after the applicants have been advised of their application outcome.

(68) Unsuccessful applicants must ensure they have updated, new and relevant information and evidence to support a new application, and that all feedback provided by the Academic Promotions Committee has been addressed, before re-applying.

Reconsideration

(69) Unsuccessful applicants may request reconsideration of their application only on the grounds that a procedural irregularity has occurred.

(70) A request for reconsideration will only be considered after the applicant has met with the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee to discuss the outcome of their promotion application.

(71) When requesting reconsideration, applicants must provide a written statement to the Chair within 28 days from the date of the letter of outcome, detailing the procedural irregularity, supported by evidence.

(72) Requests for reconsideration will be considered by the Reconsideration Review Group, convened by the Chief People Officer or nominee, who will advise the Vice-Chancellor whether a procedural irregularity has occurred and if an application should be reconsidered by the original Academic Promotions Committee.

(73) Where a procedural irregularity was determined not to have affected the Academic Promotions Committee outcome, the original decision will stand.

(74) Where a procedural irregularity was determined to have adversely affected the Academic Promotions Committee outcome, the original committee will reconvene and reconsider the application and provide a new recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor.

(75) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving the outcome, based on the recommendations presented by the Academic Promotions Committee.

(76) The applicant will be informed in writing of the final outcome by the Vice-Chancellor.

(77) Unsuccessful applicants have the right to use the University Workplace Issue Resolution (Staff) Procedure or the Dispute Resolution Procedure outlined in the Enterprise Agreement or consult the University or State Ombudsman (Ombudsman Statute 2009). Typically, the Dispute Resolution Procedure would only be used only after the final outcome of a request for reconsideration is known.

Part F - Special Cases

Upgrading a Reversionary Substantive Position

(78) A staff member who holds a continuing substantive position and is appointed as a result of an externally competitive process to a fixed-term academic position at a higher level at La Trobe, may apply for promotion to upgrade their reversionary substantive position.

(79) Provided that the fixed-term appointment and the substantive position are both research-only positions, the staff member may submit their appointment application in place of the narrative section of their promotion application. All other promotion documentation and reports are required as for a standard application.

(80) A current Level C member of staff who has been awarded an ARC Future Fellowship or an NHMRC Investigator Grant at equivalent to Level D may apply for promotion on the basis of excellence in research to upgrade their substantive position. Provided the applicant applies within 18 months of being awarded the Future Fellowship or Investigator Grant, the Committee will accept the reports for the Future Fellowship or Investigator Grant application in place of the usual assessor reports. The applicant should submit a full standard application for promotion together with the relevant reports, including the Dean Report, and also may wish to submit a rejoinder.

Promotion of Joint Appointments

(81) In the case of joint appointments, the promotion decision by the majority participant (employer) will be recognized by the other participating employer unless otherwise agreed in writing.

(82) In the case where joint appointments are equal (50:50), the employers will agree in writing on which party will take responsibility for the one promotion process of staff and that decision will be accepted by the other partner.

(83) The staff member must provide written confirmation of the promotion from the other partner institution to the Dean, Executive Officer and Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee.

Out of Cycle Expedited Promotion – Exceptional Circumstances

(84) In exceptional circumstances, and when it is deemed by the Vice-Chancellor to be an appropriate mechanism to support the University's strategic operational goals, an application for promotion may be considered outside of the normal promotions schedule. This may include situations where the University wishes to counter an offer received by a high performing staff member.

(85) The criteria for out-of-cycle expedited applications will be consistent with the standards expected for promotion through the normal promotions round. The Committee also will consider the strategic significance of the staff member's contributions to the School and University.

(86) The Provost may put forward to the Vice-Chancellor a recommendation that a staff member be considered for out-of-cycle promotion. Documentation submitted by the Provost should include:

a. an up-to date version of the staff member's curriculum vitae, the completed promotions application form and supporting evidence.
b. a statement by the Provost detailing the exceptional circumstances which would warrant out-of-cycle, expedited assessment (including evidence of an offer to the staff member from another University if this is the basis for the case)
c. the date by which the applicant must respond to an offer from another University (if applicable)
d. the significance of the staff member's contributions in terms of meeting strategic or operational objectives of the area/University
e. an assessment of the staff member's profile and contributions against the criteria for promotion to that level
f. a statement from the Dean supporting the promotion
g. details of two assessors nominated by the Provost in consultation with the professor of discipline or other appropriate senior person with a knowledge of a particular discipline or specialist area may be required upon request of the Vice-Chancellor and/or the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee. The Provost should also ascertain before putting forward the names of assessors, whether they would be willing/available to provide reports at short notice if so requested.

(87) The Provost should forward all of the above documentation in electronic form to the Executive Officer, Academic Promotions Committee, at the time the submission is made to the Vice-Chancellor.

(88) The Vice-Chancellor will advise the Executive Officer, Academic Promotions Committee, whether they endorse the application.

(89) The Executive Officer will ensure the application is considered by the Academic Promotions Committee as soon as practicable.

(90) After reviewing the case, the Committee may recommend the payment of a retention allowance as an alternative to promotion.

(91) For applications presented out of cycle and/or in exceptional circumstances, the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving any variations to the academic promotions process and the outcome of the application.

Section 7 - Definitions

(92) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedures:

a. External assessor: An academic with national or international standing within the relevant discipline from an institution other than La Trobe University who is able to provide an independent, objective and informed judgement on the quality and impact of the applicant's work in relation to the case for promotion. External assessors will be at or above the academic level for which promotion is being sought. External assessors must be independent of the applicant; they must not have/had a professional or personal relationship with the applicant (e.g. current or past colleague, research collaborator, etc). External Assessors are nominated by the applicant's Dean.
b. Evidence: externally peer-reviewed outputs, appropriate preparation and staff development, feedback and evaluations from relevant people such as referees, students, supervisors or external partners.
c. Leadership: leadership in promoting research, developing research training, fostering excellence in teaching and encouraging academic staff development; the willingness and ability to provide leadership in a discipline, program, School, within the University and the community at large.
d. Referee: An academic or professional referee must be at or above the academic level for which the applicant is seeking promotion and be able to provide an informed judgement on the quality of work of the applicant in relation to the case for promotion. Professional or industry referees are expected to hold national standing or equivalent in the applicant's field of expertise. External referees must be from an institution other than La Trobe University.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(93) This Policy is made under the La Trobe University Act 2009.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	20th February 2025
Review Date	20th February 2028
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	20th February 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Chris Pakes Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) +61 3 9479 1485
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