



University Governance

Governance Level Principle – No. GLP1

Relevant UTAS Ordinance and/or Rule Reference No.	Ordinances 1 (The Role of Council), 3 (The Vice-Chancellor), 13 (Academic Senate), 6 (Council Delegations)
Relevant State/Federal Govt. Legislation	University of Tasmania Act 1992
Commencement Date	19 November 2004
Review Date	31 March 2007

1. Statement of Context

The University of Tasmania is a complex institution carrying out critical roles in society, primarily through the creation, preservation and transmission of knowledge.

The operation of the University involves many people who interact both in networks and in more formal organisational structures. While students and academics rightly focus on research, teaching and learning activities, to operate effectively a university must have sound and effective governance arrangements.

The governance arrangements for the University involve three key ‘governing entities’ that operate in effective partnership:

- Council;
- the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Management Team; and
- Academic Senate.

All three entities have roles and responsibilities with academic and managerial dimensions.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this principle are to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation of the University through:

- more clearly describing roles, responsibilities and accountabilities;
- better articulating where the boundaries are between governing entities and how they inter-relate; and
- implementing an integrated and comprehensive set of principles, policies and procedures.

3. Governance Framework

The governance framework has four elements:

- role definitions, delegations and accountabilities set out in Ordinances covering the Governing Entities;
- an Operating Statement contained in this principle;

- Council approved plans: a strategic plan and a fiscal framework supported by more detailed multi-year plans and performance measures for critical activities; and
- an integrated set of Principles, Policies and Procedures.

4. Roles, Delegations and Accountabilities

4.1 Council

In terms of legal powers, the governing body is the Council, which has statutory responsibility for strategic direction, academic and general reputation, financial viability and the maintenance of high standards of conduct and probity.

4.2 Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Management Team

Council delegates broad powers to the Vice-Chancellor (the managerial and academic leader) to manage the operations of the University in conformity with agreed plans, principles and policies. Responsibilities and accountability requirements for the Vice-Chancellor are established in the position description and within the annual performance management framework for the position.

Limits on delegated authority cover:

- any areas reserved by Council for its sole authority;
- financial expenditure;
- contracting;
- appointing and terminating direct reports; and
- specified powers that cannot be further delegated.

The Vice-Chancellor in turn empowers other key members of the Senior Management Team:

- some of whom operate in Faculties; and
- some of whom have responsibilities that cut across Faculties, such as finance and administration, international programs, teaching and learning and research and research training.

Delegations from the Vice-Chancellor to direct reports are recorded in a delegations register. Responsibilities and accountabilities are established in position descriptions and within the annual performance management framework for respective positions.

4.3 Academic Senate

The third governing entity is the Academic Senate which, within the agreed plans, principles and policies:

- is responsible for academic matters within the University;
- approves all proposals from Faculties and Schools relating to awards; and
- advises Council on maintaining and enhancing the academic standing of the university.

5. Operating Statement

In pursuing the effective operation of the University, the Governing Entities are guided by the following:

- Success requires a strong culture of partnership – cooperatively achieving the goals of the University through a results focus;
- Clear responsibilities and accountabilities are established at all levels. Objectives and targets are set and performance is reviewed at appropriate intervals;
- Council is the governing authority, and concentrates on mission, vision, strategy and general oversight of overall University performance, for which it is ultimately accountable;
- The Vice-Chancellor, supported by the Senior Management Team, is expected to provide regular creative and strategic advice to Council so that the process of formulating strategy is an ongoing, iterative one;
- Academic Senate interacts with Council to identify priority areas of focus and also undertakes decision roles delegated by Council, for which it is accountable. It advises Council on maintaining and enhancing the academic standing of the University, as well as fostering collegiality and supporting the engagement of academic colleagues;
- The Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Management Team aim for a 'no shocks or surprises' relationship with Council, typified by openness and transparency. Council is promptly advised of critical issues with the potential to significantly impact on strategy or operational performance or the University's public image;
- University operations are the clear province of the Vice-Chancellor. However, Council may oversight performance in specific areas of particular strategic importance from time to time, as a normal part of good governance;
- The Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Senate regularly consider the interplay between University strategy and operations and academic quality/standing. Open, two-way communication between the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Senate is critical to fostering collegiality and achieving the University's goals;
- Risks are regularly identified, assessed, managed, monitored and reported through appropriate involvement at all levels in the University; and
- Working level understandings are developed between principals about:
 - how governing entities will interact; and
 - key priorities for an appropriate forward period.

6. Plans

The cornerstone of University planning is the Council approved University Plan. The Fiscal Framework is also approved by Council and involves two components:

- a budget; and
- a high-level, multi-year business framework.

The University Plan is supported by more detailed multi-year plans and performance measures covering critical activities, including such areas as:

- Community Engagement;
- Enrolment Profile;
- Equity and Diversity;
- External Development;
- Information Communication Technology;
- Research and Research Training;
- Staff Profile
- Strategic Asset Development 2006-2011; and
- Teaching and Learning Development;

The Vice-Chancellor oversees the development of these subsidiary plans for Council to note.

7. **Integrated Principles, Policies and Procedures**

Governance level principles are established by the Council to apply across the University.

They are statements of the principles under which the University will operate, covering:

- Academic Standards
- Built Environment;
- Code of Conduct;
- Consultancies
- Employment;
- Environmental Management;
- Intellectual Property;
- Investment;
- Occupational Health and Safety;
- Procurement and Contracts
- Public Relations and Communications;
- Risk Management; and
- University Governance.

A number of elements are common to most of these principles, and are set out here rather than being included in each individual principle.

The University will, in respect of each principle:

- establish and communicate operational policies supported by specific plans, management systems and procedures;
- ensure effective resourcing and implementation of policies, plans, management systems and procedures;
- educate and train members of the University community to continually improve awareness, skills and knowledge of principles, policies, plans, management systems and procedures;

- establish, monitor, review and report performance measures and take necessary action to improve performance (Note – the focus here is on outcomes or results);
- establish, monitor, audit, review and report on specific management systems and procedures and take necessary action to improve compliance (Note – the focus here is on how things are done);
- ensure that there is appropriate ongoing review, development and continuous improvement of policies, plans, management systems and procedures.

The person identified in each principle as being responsible for implementation of that principle is also responsible for ensuring these elements are undertaken.

Operational Policies apply across the University and, in general, are approved by the Vice-Chancellor. In some cases, because of legal requirements, some Operational Policies might have to be embodied in University Ordinances or By-Laws. In other cases, the policy involved might be particularly far-reaching for the University and its operations. In these circumstances, policies will need to be approved by Council. All Operational Policies comply with relevant higher levels of University policy, such as relevant legislation, ordinances, rules, principles and plans.

The University has adopted a standard policy and procedure for Operational Policy Development and Review. This is used in the development and review of all University Operational Policies and Procedures.

Operational Policies are detailed specifications of the operating arrangements (including specific delegations) that apply across the University including:

Areas covered by operational policies include (but are not restricted to);

- code of conduct implementation;
- academic standards and course approvals;
- occupational health and safety management;
- equity and diversity;
- intellectual property management;
- environmental management;
- public relations and communications;
- risk management;
- accounting and financial management;
- procurement and contracting;
- asset management;
- personnel management;
- student administration and services;
- teaching and learning;
- research and development;
- information management;
- accommodation services;

- campus development;
- external development (interstate and overseas); and
- consultancy and commercialisation.

Operational Procedures apply within a specific operational area and are approved by the head of that area. These must be consistent with governance level principle and operational plans.