



**Student  
Representatives  
Committee Handbook**

# The Role of Committees

## What is a committee?

A committee is usually a collective of people who are officially delegated to perform a task or function on behalf of the University. The tasks or functions can vary, but they most commonly act as a decision-making body, but can also consider official reports, perform assessments or reviews, support and oversee the implementation of policy or plans and can also ensure legislative requirements are met.

## Governance

At Griffith, our committees play a key role in corporate and academic governance, a key requirement under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

The Griffith University Act 1998 [the Act] establishes the Council of Griffith University as the University's governing body. Through its strategic oversight, Council ensures the effective oversight over the management of the University and utilises a system of delegations and reporting to ensure accountability of its ultimate governance responsibilities.

Under the Act, Council can delegate some of its powers to an appropriately qualified committee, that includes one or more members of the Council. The constitutions of key committees and sub-committees detail the committee's role, functions, delegated authorities and membership as delegated by Council.

To support committees reporting to Council, Griffith also has several other central and specialist committees. These support the development and improvement of policies and procedures, academic and strategic planning, quality assurance, program and course delivery, and the enhancement of the student learning experience, teaching and research.



*The Hon Andrew Fraser (Chancellor)*

For an overview of Griffith committees see Appendix 1.

**For further information and a list of current committees visit:**

[griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/corporate-governance/university-committees](http://griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/corporate-governance/university-committees)

# Role of Student Representatives

As a major stakeholder in a university, student representatives ensure that the student voice is heard. To ensure you get the best out of the experience there are some key things to consider.

## Engage

Being on a committee is about building a positive relationship with other committee members so that you can work proactively together to improve the student experience.

To be an effective Student Representative, you will also need to actively seek out ways to engage with your fellow students, so that you can act as their voice on the committee. If you are unsure of what resources are available to help you connect with your fellow students, contact the committee chair or secretary.



### Connect with Clubs and Societies

Set up formal or informal feedback sessions or a focus group

Speak to University staff about ways to connect with students

Contact your campus Student Representative Council (SRC) or Student Guild.

## Effective Participation

As a member of a committee, you will need to be an active participant in the meetings. You can demonstrate this by coming prepared to the meetings and being ready to contribute to the discussions and advocating on issues that impact on your fellow students.

When thinking about how you can be an effective participant also:

- consider why you want to be a member of the committee
- familiarise yourself with the committees constitution, which will outline its role and delegations
- read the agenda and papers before each meeting and bring along notes and ideas about points of interest
- consult with your fellow students or key representatives so that key items can be raised
- look for ways to support members of the committee who express views that are similar to your own, or the students you are representing
- voice your disagreement or any concerns in a constructive and respectful way
- reach out to the committee Chair or Secretary to discuss a contribution you wish to make before the meeting, so they are aware of your interest to speak

## Role of Committee Members

### *Chair and Deputy Chair*

The Chair or Deputy Chair (in the absence of the Chair) preside over meetings and ensures they are managed effectively and in the best interests of the University. They also have a second casting vote when there is a tied vote.

- responsible for calling, cancelling, and adjourning meetings
- sets and approves agendas and discussion items
- approves attendance of visitors and observers
- guides debate towards resolution

### *The Committee Secretary*

- manages meeting logistics (venue bookings, technology, presenters)
- prepares and distributes documentation (workplans, agendas and minutes)
- coordinates tasks or action items that may need to be undertaken
- provides support to the Chair and Deputy Chair

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### *The Members*

Members provide valuable input into the decision-making process.

They have the right to:

- request the inclusion of an item on the agenda, provided that it is within the authority of the committee to deal with such matters, and the item is received in an appropriate time frame
- request an amendment to the minutes on the grounds that they are inaccurate
- have their dissension, abstention or vote recorded in the minutes.

### *Committee members are obliged to advise the chair or the committee secretary of:*

- their resignation from the committee
- the fact that they no longer hold the necessary qualification for their membership category
- their planned absence from the University and therefore from the committee for a period of time.

## Meeting Etiquette

Most committee meetings will follow a structured format.

Agendas and papers are normally published on the Committee's SharePoint site approximately five working days prior to a meeting. Once they are available, take the time read through the agenda and accompanying papers prior to the meeting, and take the time to engage with your fellow students for any feedback they may wish to have conveyed at the meeting.

Meetings can be conducted in a blended format through a combination of in-person and online, so it is important to check the attendance requirements and format prior to the meeting. If you cannot attend a meeting, or you are going to be delayed, you should advise the committee secretary prior to the meeting.

Lastly, consider the general conduct of the meeting. For example, how the committee prefers to have items raised for discussion, appropriate dress, and the best way to address members of the committee - for example by first name, or with titles. If you are unsure, contact the Chair or Secretary for further information and support.



# Benefits of Student Representation

Becoming a Student Representative on university committees provides you with an opportunity to expand your professional networks, develop personal and professional skills and make a difference to the University.



Amplify the Student Voice

Be an advocate for change

Support informed decisions

Positively impact the Student Experience

Partner with the University and your fellow students

## Career Readiness

When you are thinking about your employability throughout your studies and beyond graduation, there are a range of professional skills you will have the opportunity to develop as a Student Representative. These can be readily sought after by employers, across various industries.



**Critical Thinking**



**Communication**



**Collaboration**



**Persuasion and Negotiation**

# Support and Resources

University Committee Site [griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/corporate-governance/university-committees](https://griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/corporate-governance/university-committees)

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Policies [policies.griffith.edu.au](https://policies.griffith.edu.au)

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## Key Terms

Agenda	A document that outlines the plan the meeting will follow and the items for discussion.
Apologies	Given by members that are unable to attend the meeting.
Ex officio	This person is a member of the committee, due to the position that they hold within the University, for example the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor is ex officio Chair of the Research Committee.
Elected	An appointment made in accordance with the University's election procedures.
Appointed	An appointment made by a designated position or committee.
Co-opted	An appointment made by the committee to provide specialist expertise to that committee for a specified period of time.
Minutes	An official record of what was discussed, decisions made and action items arising from the meeting.
Order of Business	The list of items comprising the agenda and the order in which those items appear on the agenda. This may also include any items that are open for a more detail discussion or explanation of the University's position.
Proxy	A substitute sent by a committee member to attend a meeting on their behalf.
Rights of audience and debate	Usually positions which can contribute to the committee's discussion via way of information, e.g., Chairs of a committee's subcommittees or designated officers of the University, but do not have voting rights.
Standing Orders	Sets out how meetings should be run.
Constitution, or Terms of Reference	Details the specific authority of the committee and the delegated area of responsibility.
Conflict of Interest	Occurs where a committee member with a particular interest could be influenced, or might appear to be influenced, in the performance of their duties. Committee members are required to disclose any conflict of interests.

# Appendix

## 1. Griffith University Committees



