

## Academic Standards Framework

(As approved by 20/5 Academic Board on 11 November 2020 – AB/20-5/85.2, with amendments approved under Delegation 3.14.2 on 24 February 2022)

### Purpose

1. The Academic Standards Framework (the framework) guides the standards for UTS's activities and its alignment to the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (HESF 2021) to effectively achieve desired academic outcomes in line with the [UTS 2027 strategy](#).
2. The framework seeks to ensure that UTS meets threshold or minimum requirements in all academic areas (including teaching, learning, research, scholarship and engagement), with commitment to reflective practice and continuous improvement.

### Scope

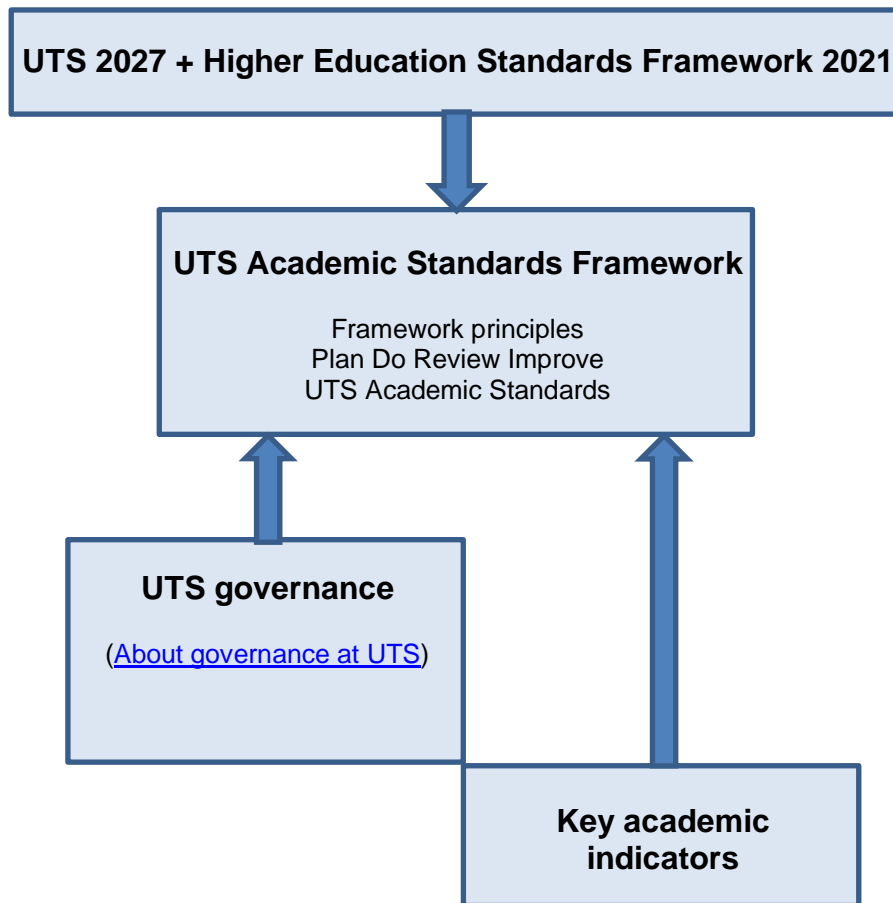
3. The framework is relevant to:
  - a. Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies), and
  - b. all staff and students.
4. The framework covers all areas of academic activities, including:
  - a. student participation and attainment
  - b. learning environment
  - c. teaching
  - d. research
  - e. research training
  - f. quality assurance
  - g. governance and accountability
  - h. integrity
  - i. supervision and progression
  - j. internships and work placements
  - k. representation, communication and information, and
  - l. external engagement and environment.

### Framework

5. The [Framework principles](#), UTS's [Plan, Do, Review, Improve](#) (PDRI) cycle and the [UTS Academic Standards](#) guide UTS's approach to quality assurance, quality improvement and, therefore, UTS's alignment to the [HESF 2021](#).

## Framework flowchart

6. The flowchart shows the interrelationship of various elements of the framework.



## Framework principles

7. UTS's academic activities must be:
- delivered effectively with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
  - aligned with the [UTS 2027 strategy](#)
  - predicated on achieving high quality outcomes for students, beneficiaries of research, external partners and other stakeholders
  - aligned with and responsive to regulatory requirements
  - based on commitment to continuous improvement and aspiration to excel, underpinned by external benchmarking for academic quality and outcomes
  - strengthened by sound academic leadership, staff and student participation, and constancy of purpose of the university and its committees
  - underpinned by UTS's principles of integrity
  - aligned with UTS's risk management principles, and
  - well measured and informed, with transparent decision-making in line with UTS accountability systems.

## Plan, Do, Review, Improve

8. The Plan, Do, Review, Improve (PDRI) cycle is used for continuous improvement of quality in processes at UTS. It involves a series of systematic and continuous actions leading to improvements. PDRI cycles are determined at faculty, school and unit level. Refer [Quality and standards](#) and [Corporate planning, reporting and reviews](#) (Staff Connect).

## UTS Academic Standards

9. UTS Academic Standards ([Appendix 1](#)) are the objectives against which performance of academic activities are assessed based on key academic indicators.
10. The UTS Academic Standards apply to the development and delivery of UTS:
  - a. coursework award courses
  - b. graduate research courses, and
  - c. research.

## UTS governance

11. UTS governance processes outlined in the [UTS Act and By-law](#), the [UTS Rules](#) and [Policies](#) ensure appropriate strategic and operational oversight of the quality and standards of UTS's academic activities.
12. Responsible officers identified in the standards are delegated authority under the [UTS Delegations](#) to undertake relevant academic processes in line with relevant policies and procedures to ensure academic standards are met.

## Role of Academic Board in planning for and improving standards

13. As per its functions and powers defined in [Division 3, Rule G3](#) of the General Rules, Academic Board has a responsibility to establish and maintain academic leadership by sustainably and effectively overseeing, assessing, monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality and outcome of UTS's academic work (including teaching, learning, scholarship, research and research training). Academic Board reports to and advises Council and the Vice-Chancellor on the quality, standards and benchmarks appropriate to all aspects of UTS's academic work.
14. Academic Board uses a range of mechanisms and tools to achieve continuous improvement, including but not limited to:
  - a. alignment of terms of reference of Academic Board and its committees with the [HESF 2021](#) to enable the board to provide a lead role in academic governance in areas of teaching, learning, research, scholarship, policy development, monitoring and implementation, and other academic activities
  - b. development of an annual forward plan for Academic Board and its committees that aligns with the [UTS 2027 strategy](#), and is strengthened by a university-wide governance framework (of delegations, rules, policies and governance principles, supported by local level procedures and guidelines), and annual reporting on forward plans. Forward plans should be based on the three key areas that are the focus of Academic Board activities:
    - academic strategy
    - academic quality (covering academic governance, including policy and standards), and

- academic risk
  - c. alignment of Academic Board/committee reports with the [UTS 2027 strategy](#) and the three key areas of academic strategy, academic quality and academic risk
  - d. an advisory committee (Executive Committee of Academic Board (ECAB)) to support the business of Academic Board and ensure quality interaction between the board and its committees
  - e. Academic Board surveys (biennial for members of the board and its committees, and quadrennial for stakeholders) to assess the effectiveness of the board and its committees and recommend necessary improvements
  - f. regular reviews:
    - annual self-assessment of terms of reference and composition of Academic Board committees
    - ad hoc internal and external reviews of Academic Board's operations and effectiveness
  - g. extensive collaboration and consultation on key academic matters with students, staff and other stakeholders including:
    - Council (via Council reporting and the Chair of Academic Board attending Council meetings)
    - senior executives (via Senior Executive Meetings or Vice-Chancellor's Management Group)
    - Academic Board committees including faculty boards ('feedback from Academic Board' is a standing item on the agenda)
    - Vice-Chancellor/Provost's feedback to the Chair of Academic Board
    - briefings of student members of Academic Board by the Chair
    - faculty board visits by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Academic Board
    - external accreditation agencies for course accreditation (via faculties, Courses Accreditation Committee and faculty boards)
    - university community (via Academic Board forums and newsletters)
  - h. rigorous, transparent and diligent processes for governance of committee meetings (including recording of actions, minute taking, communication of actions/decisions to relevant stakeholders, and tracking/reporting on the completion of actions and implementation of decisions)
  - i. clear and transparent plans, systems, policies and processes relating to academic activities are operational, implemented and regularly reviewed for continuous improvement via external benchmarking and environmental scans
  - j. annual assessments of strategic risks and the development of relevant risk management strategies with consideration being given to the faculty and business unit risk assessments performed as part of the UTS Corporate Plan and ongoing operations activities.
15. In addition to the above, the assurance processes overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee are part of UTS's key mechanism for continuous quality improvement. These include:
- a. internal audits, investigations, testing and evaluation of controls against risks and self-assessments administered by the Director, Internal Audit
  - b. risk assessments, reviews and process improvement activities administered by the Director, Risk, and
  - c. management reviews overseen and evaluated by the Senior Executive.

## **Framework ownership and support**

16. Academic Board is responsible for and approves this framework.
17. ECAB is responsible for enforcement of, and compliance with, this framework, ensuring that its principles and statements are observed.

## Appendix 1: UTS Academic Standards

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
<b>1. Admission</b>				
1.1 UTS accepts students who demonstrate the capacity to be successful in their study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admission</li> <li>Enrolment</li> <li>Orientation/induction</li> <li>Credit recognition</li> <li>Student recruitment and outreach</li> <li>Academic support</li> <li><a href="#">UTS Model of Learning</a></li> <li><a href="#">Social Impact Framework</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Board and its committees</li> <li>Provost</li> <li>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)</li> <li>Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion</li> <li>Executive Director, Lifetime Learner Experience Unit</li> <li>Director, UTS International</li> <li>Deans</li> <li>Responsible Academic Officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admissions outcomes (for example student offers to acceptance rates, ATAR and other cut-offs)</li> <li>Proportion of student first preferences (UTS KPI)</li> <li>Retention</li> <li>Diverse student body</li> </ul>	1.1 Admission 4.2 Research Training
1.2 Potential UTS students are provided with a range of entry pathways recognising the diversity of educational and life experiences				1.1 Admission
1.3 UTS provides sufficient, accurate and timely information to allow potential students to make informed education choices				1.1 Admission 7.1 Representation 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students
1.4 UTS supports students in their transition to higher education				1.3 Orientation and Progression 4.2 Research Training
1.5 UTS encourages lifelong learning, including formal, informal and non-formal learning, and provides the opportunity for students to have previous learning recognised for credit in their courses				1.1 Admission 1.2 Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning
1.6 UTS encourages and supports a diverse student population		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council</li> <li>Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion</li> <li>All staff and students</li> </ul>		2.2 Diversity and Equity

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
<b>2. Courses</b>				
2.1 UTS courses are consistent with the <a href="#">UTS 2027 strategy</a> and relevant university strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic and academic work planning</li> <li>• Initial strategic assessment</li> <li>• Course planning</li> <li>• Industry advisory committees</li> <li>• Industry consultation</li> <li>• Course accreditation/review</li> <li>• Subject approval</li> <li>• Course/subject preparation and delivery</li> <li>• UTS course performance reporting</li> <li>• Course experience questionnaire</li> <li>• Student Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>• <a href="#">UTS Model of Learning</a></li> <li>• Graduate attributes</li> <li>• Diversity guidelines for courses and subjects</li> <li>• Staff recruitment, induction and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies)</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)</li> <li>• Deans, associate deans (teaching and learning) and institute and centre directors</li> <li>• Manager, University Academic Programs Office</li> <li>• Manager, Higher Education Language and Presentation Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculties implement course plan that aligns with strategy</li> <li>• UTS accreditation</li> <li>• Professional accreditation</li> <li>• Reputation with industry and the professions (UTS KPI)</li> <li>• Graduate satisfaction</li> <li>• Industry/profession satisfaction</li> <li>• Student success</li> <li>• Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course</li> <li>• Learning outcomes</li> </ul>	
2.2 UTS courses meet relevant regulatory and professional accreditation requirements				1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 1.5 Qualifications and Certification 4.2 Research Training 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation 6.3 Academic Governance
2.3 UTS works with the needs of industry and the professions in the development of courses				
2.4 At UTS, each course has a course-specific graduate profile, which reflects UTS's vision and the related professions and disciplines. Accordingly, to qualify for a UTS award, a student must undertake a specified minimum amount of study in that course at UTS				1.2 Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment
2.5 UTS students have the opportunity to complement their learning with academic and personal support and development programs, including specific programs for students at academic risk				1.3 Orientation and Progression 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support 4.2 Research Training
2.6 UTS research students are each supported with a plan that reflects				4.2 Research Training

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
their academic and professional experiences and goals				
2.7 UTS staff have, and maintain, the necessary disciplinary and pedagogical expertise to effectively deliver courses				3.2 Staffing 4.1 Research 4.2 Research Training 6.3 Academic Governance
<b>3. Assessment</b>				
3.1 Assessment at UTS is equitable and timely, and students are provided with avenues to provide feedback and resolve questions and issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination / assessment</li> <li>• Feedback to students</li> <li>• Academic support</li> <li>• Student education on integrity</li> <li>• Academic misconduct procedures</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies)</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)</li> <li>• Director, Institute of Media and Learning</li> <li>• Director, Student Administration Unit</li> <li>• Deans, associate deans (teaching and learning) and institute and centre directors</li> <li>• Responsible Academic Officers, subject coordinators and appointed assessors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student retention</li> <li>• Student success</li> <li>• Student satisfaction with subjects (UTS KPI) and course</li> <li>• Assessment report</li> <li>• Student misconduct</li> <li>• Learning outcome</li> </ul>	1.3 Orientation and Progression 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment
3.2 Assessment at UTS is criterion-based, with methods of assessment that are appropriate to the course's graduate attributes and subject's learning outcomes				1.3 Orientation and Progression 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment
3.3 UTS students are provided with formative assessment in the course of learning				1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment
<b>4. Research</b>				
4.1 UTS research is consistent with <a href="#">UTS 2027 strategy</a> and relevant university strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Board and its committees (including</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each faculty and centre has implemented a research plan that aligns</li> </ul>	



Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
4.2 UTS seeks external research collaboration, including working with industry and the professions in research development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication strategies</li> <li>• Publications for various audiences</li> </ul>	faculty boards and boards of studies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</li> </ul>	to the <a href="#">UTS Research Strategy</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities allocated</li> </ul>	
4.3 UTS staff have, and maintain, the necessary disciplinary and research methodologies to effectively conduct research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research education</li> <li>• Researcher development</li> <li>• Academic work planning</li> <li>• Research strategic planning and alignment</li> <li>• Processes to develop high quality applications aligned with UTS strategy</li> <li>• Research facilities management</li> <li>• Development and supervision of doctoral study plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Research Office</li> <li>• Deans, associate deans (research) and institute and centre directors</li> <li>• Manager, Research Integrity and Research Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact metrics for faculty, research strength and university</li> <li>• Research leadership index</li> <li>• Number of weighted publications (total and per full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff)</li> <li>• Total research income from all Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) reported categories</li> </ul>	3.2 Staffing 4.1 Research 4.2 Research Training 6.3 Academic Governance
<b>5. Learning environment</b>				
5.1 Student learning is supported by appropriate resources, learning spaces, technologies and other facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus and services design and delivery</li> <li>• <a href="#">UTS Model of Learning</a></li> <li>• Student progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies)</li> <li>• Academic Board and its committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities allocated</li> </ul>	2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support 4.2 Research Training
5.2 UTS students have the opportunity to engage with the university, community and industry throughout their study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff recruitment, induction and development</li> <li>• Professional experience and work integrated learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Operating Officer</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student success</li> <li>• Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course</li> </ul>	2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student feedback surveys</li> <li>• Student logistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</li> <li>• Deans</li> <li>• Director, Institute of Media and Learning</li> <li>• Director, Campus Strategy and Facilities</li> <li>• Chief Information Officer</li> </ul>		
<b>6. Academic quality assurance</b>				
6.1 UTS courses are regularly reviewed against regulatory, academic discipline and industry standards, as well as student experience of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course accreditation</li> <li>• External accreditation</li> <li>• Performance reporting</li> <li>• Industry participation</li> <li>• UTS planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Board and its committees (including faculty boards and boards of studies)</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UTS accreditation</li> <li>• Professional accreditation</li> <li>• Reputation with industry and the professions (UTS KPI)</li> </ul>	1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement
6.2 UTS student outcomes are regularly reviewed and quality is assessed against institutional benchmarks with the results used to inform improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Experience Questionnaire</li> <li>• Student Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>• Review and improvements cycles</li> <li>• Academic Quality and Standards Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deans, associate deans (teaching and learning) and institute and centre directors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student success</li> <li>• Student satisfaction with learning environment (UTS KPI) and course</li> </ul>	1.3 Orientation and Progression 2.2 Diversity and Equality 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability 6.3 Academic Governance
<b>7. Academic governance</b>				
7.1 The implementation of UTS academic standards is assured by UTS academic governance processes, including risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee structure and meetings</li> <li>• Governance instruments including <a href="#">UTS Act and</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and its committees</li> <li>• Academic Board and its committees (including</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with internal processes (elections, course accreditation,</li> </ul>	6.1 Corporate Governance 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability 6.3 Academic Governance

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
7.2 UTS students have the opportunity to participate in the academic governance of UTS	<a href="#">By-law</a> , <a href="#">UTS Rules</a> , <a href="#">Delegations</a> and <a href="#">policies</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elections</li> </ul>	faculty boards and boards of studies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Secretary and Director, Governance Support Unit</li> </ul>	course and subject performance review) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with external accreditation processes</li> </ul>	6.3 Academic Governance
7.3 UTS academic standards apply to activities undertaken with other parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assurance mapping</li> <li>• Induction/education programs</li> <li>• UTS Risk Management Policy and Procedures</li> <li>• Strategic Risk Assessment for Academic Board</li> <li>• Faculty and business unit risk assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Student Services Unit</li> <li>• Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion</li> <li>• Director, Risk</li> <li>• Director, Internal Audit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with internal processes for stakeholder feedback and student participation</li> </ul>	5.2 Academic and Research Integrity 5.4 Delivery with Other Parties 6.1 Corporate Governance
7.4 UTS staff, students and researchers appropriately protect UTS intellectual property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research activities</li> <li>• Research management</li> <li>• Researcher development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deans, and institute and centre directors</li> <li>• Research integrity advisers</li> <li>• Responsible Academic Officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with <a href="#">Intellectual Property Policy</a></li> </ul>	4.1 Research 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity
7.5 UTS protects and promotes intellectual freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication strategies to inform staff about UTS and faculty resources that support development and management of research projects</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with <a href="#">Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Policy</a></li> <li>• Impact metrics for faculty, centres and university</li> <li>• Research leadership index</li> <li>• Number of weighted publications</li> <li>• Number of weighted publications per full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff</li> </ul>	6.1 Corporate Governance

Academic standards	Academic processes	Responsible officer(s)	Key academic indicators	HESF cross reference
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total research income from all Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) reported categories</li> </ul>	
7.6 UTS staff and students are expected to maintain a high level of academic and research integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student education on academic integrity — online and workshops</li> <li>Academic misconduct procedures</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with academic integrity framework</li> <li>Assessment report</li> </ul>	4.1 Research 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity
7.7 Mechanisms exist for students to make complaints or appeals on UTS academic matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appeals and complaints procedures</li> <li>Policies on student complaints</li> <li>Guidelines for Research Integrity Breaches</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with internal processes for student complaints and appeals.</li> <li>Deliver timely resolution of formal complaints and appeals</li> </ul>	2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints 6.3 Academic Governance