Policy: Delegations of authority

Purpose

To establish a Framework for delegating authority within the University that is accurate and accessible and provides for internal processes for monitoring compliance with and evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework.

Overview

Under section 17 of the Australian National University Act 1991 the Council has delegated some of its functions and powers to the Vice-Chancellor, including the power to “control and manage the affairs and concerns of the University.” The Delegations Framework approved by the Vice-Chancellor is an integral part of the University’s governance framework. It devolves authority to appropriate levels within the University’s staffing structure in a systematic way, sets out decision making arrangements and allocates responsibilities in a systematic way. The policy outlines the principles of the Framework and the responsibilities of staff who exercise delegations. (The Delegations Framework is described in detail in the Delegations of Authority Procedure paper.)

Scope

This Policy applies across the University.

Policy statement

Principles

1. The Vice-Chancellor oversees the management of delegations of authority made under this policy.

2. The Delegations Framework reflects the University’s organisational structure. Except where delegates are specified in University legislation, authorities held by the least senior delegate are held also by that delegate’s immediate supervisor or line manager and successively by each subsequent supervisor or line manager within the chain of delegation. If a supervisor or line manager wishes to exercise a delegation held by a delegate, he or she MUST do so BEFORE the delegate exercises his or her delegation. It is expected that this
approach would be used only in special circumstances as frequent use would be inconsistent with the policy principle of devolved authority.

3. The Delegations Framework is focussed primarily on matters which relate to financial transactions or to contractual or legislated arrangements with staff, students, and persons and organisations outside the University.

4. The Framework is made up of three types of delegations: Banded (Generic) Delegations which are assigned in accordance with level of responsibility; Specialist Delegations which are held by occupants of designated positions; and Legislative Delegations which are held by persons holding an office prescribed in legislation.

5. Delegation profiles are a mechanism to group together delegations of the same level of authority or type of responsibility into a single profile name for more efficient assignment to positions.

6. Delegations are classified as transferrable or non-transferrable. Non-transferrable delegations are attached to specific delegations profiles and may only be exercised by delegates holding those specific profiles and their supervisor or line manager (except in the case of legislative delegations – see Delegations of Authority Procedure paper for further information).

7. Delegations are assigned to positions and are exercised by the officer substantively appointed to the relevant post. They may also extend to a person acting in that position for a specified period. In some circumstances, it may be deemed necessary to assign delegations to a ‘Person of Interest’ who is associated with the University but is not an employee of the University.

8. Delegations are to be exercised within the framework of University legislation, policy, procedures, guidelines and any external legislative requirements.

9. Delegates may only exercise delegations in regard to matters within their own area of responsibility or those of positions within their line management, and within the limits of the relevant approved budget or other available source of funds.

10. Delegates may not exercise delegations in respect of themselves or their own position. They may not approve any action or transaction that provides them with a direct personal benefit.

11. A delegate who is found to have exercised a delegation improperly may be subject to discipline and the delegation(s) revoked.

12. A delegate is not obliged to exercise a delegation if the delegate considers
that there are special or unusual circumstances which make it sensible for the matter to be considered at a more senior level.

13. A delegate may hold delegations, as part of a delegations profile, which they may or may not be required to exercise depending on business processes in their individual areas.

14. The Senior Delegate (D3 or above) for an area has the authority to assign delegations to positions in that area and is responsible and answerable to their supervisor and, ultimately, the Vice-Chancellor for the proper management and exercise of delegations in their area. Details regarding assignment authorities, particularly in relation to exceptions for legislative delegations, are contained in the Delegations of Authority Procedures.

15. Each area is required to keep records of all delegations assigned.

16. Senior Delegates are required to provide annual assurances that the policies of the University have been adhered to and financial controls exercised over the resources of that budget unit. These assurances form part of the University’s obligations under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013.

17. This Policy authorises the Delegations Framework. The expectation is that new or changed delegations would be raised only infrequently, and so policy development should in general terms follow the existing delegations structure.