Vice-Chancellor Selection and Appointment Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) This Procedure provides a framework for the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Newcastle (the University). The Vice-Chancellor and President is the University's principal executive officer.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure describes the steps that will be followed by the Council of the University (the Council) when selecting and appointing a Vice-Chancellor.

Section 3 - Authority

(3) This Procedure is authorised by the Council.

(4) In accordance with the University of Newcastle Act 1989 (the Act), the Council is responsible for the control and management of the affairs and concerns of the University and appoints the Vice-Chancellor and President.

(5) The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive of the University and is responsible to the Council for the leadership, management and performance of the University.

Section 4 - Timing

(6) The Council will initiate the Vice-Chancellor selection and appointment process:

a. where the incumbent's term is due to expire, approximately 12 months prior to expiry (unless the reappointment of the incumbent is agreed - see Section 10 of this procedure); or
b. where the incumbent resigns, at the Council meeting at which the resignation is received; or
c. where the incumbent provides notice of intention to resign/retire, at the meeting at which notice is received (noting the contractual obligation of 12 weeks' notice in writing); or
d. where the office is otherwise vacated, at the first available Council meeting.

(7) Where there is a vacancy, Council may appoint an Interim Vice-Chancellor.

Section 5 - Candidate Search

Vice-Chancellor Appointment Committee

(8) Council will establish a Vice-Chancellor Appointment Committee (the Committee) chaired by the Chancellor to conduct the search for candidates.

(9) The Committee shall comprise:

a. the Chancellor (Chair) (ex officio);
b. the Deputy Chancellor (ex officio);
c. President Academic Senate (ex officio);
d. members appointed by the Council, which shall include:
    i. two external members of Council (in addition to the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor);
    ii. one of the elected staff members of Council; and
    iii. one of the elected student members of Council; and
    iv. current or former vice-chancellor(s) from a university of similar standing to the University of Newcastle;
    v. HeadsUp Co-Chair; and
    vi. community stakeholder(s); and
e. additional members, appointed by the Council or co-opted by the Committee, which may include additional independent (external) persons, as appropriate.

(10) The Council and the Committee will consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation and gender balance when appointing or co-opting members.

(11) The majority of the Committee are to be members of Council.

(12) The Committee will be supported by external advisors, including executive search consultants, who are not members of the Committee and will not have voting rights.

(13) If the Chancellor is a candidate or has a conflict of interest, Council will appoint an alternative Chair.

(14) The Committee will meet as frequently as required, with the consent of the Chair.

(15) A quorum constitutes the nearest whole number above one half of the membership of the Committee.

(16) The University Secretary will act as the Secretary for the Committee.

Committee Responsibilities

(17) The Committee is responsible for:

a. identifying and co-opting additional members of the Committee if required;
b. undertaking a risk and market assessment and appointing an external executive search firm;
c. developing a role profile, candidate specification and evaluation criteria;
d. preparing for Council approval a Vice-Chancellor Selection Report template that specifies the information and assessment criteria to be provided to Council when considering the Committee's recommendation;
e. preparing a workplan and timeline;
f. overseeing the search, outreach and longlisting activities;
g. managing stakeholder engagement as appropriate, including structured consultation with the Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research and other key internal and external stakeholders (input is advisory and does not bind the Committee or Council);
h. overseeing communication and confidentiality plans and protocols;
i. conducting a national and international search process, with the support of an external executive search firm; and
j. identifying a preferred candidate for recommendation to Council.

(18) The Committee must ensure the search process promotes diversity and inclusion and seeks to attract a diverse candidate pool.

(19) The Chair is responsible for providing verbal updates to Council throughout the process.

Section 6 - Probity and Confidentiality

(20) The Disclosure of Interest Policy and its associated procedure must be adhered to by all members of the Committee.

(21) All participants must maintain strict confidentiality throughout the process.

(22) The Committee may appoint an independent probity advisor. The probity advisor, where appointed, must be independent of the University and the candidates.

(23) Records must be maintained appropriately and treated as confidential governance documents in accordance with the Records Governance Policy.

Section 7 - Candidate Requirements

(24) The preferred candidate will possess the capability and experience necessary to provide effective leadership of the University and to advance its mission, values and strategic objectives.

(25) Essential and desirable attributes will be determined by the Committee as part of the development of the role profile, candidate specification and evaluation criteria (see clause 17c).

Section 8 - Internal Candidates

(26) Internal candidates may nominate through the Chair of the Committee and advise any confidentiality requirements.

(27) Internal candidates will be treated equitably and with appropriate confidentiality.

(28) The Chair will provide feedback to internal candidates who are not shortlisted.

Section 9 - Candidate Selection

Shortlisting and Interview

(29) The Committee will shortlist candidates and conduct a structured selection process, which may include:

a. interviews;
b. presentations;
c. stakeholder engagement sessions (as determined by the Committee); and
d. psychometric or leadership assessments.

(30) The Committee will select its preferred candidate and prepare the Vice-Chancellor Selection Report in accordance with the template developed by the Committee and approved by Council (see clause 17d).

Due Diligence

(31) The preferred candidate will be subject to comprehensive due diligence, including:

a. verification of academic qualifications;
b. confirmation of employment history and leadership track record;
c. referee reports (nominated and independent);
d. probity checks (including ASIC, insolvency and criminal history checks);
e. conflict of interest assessment;
f. media, reputational and public-profile review;
g. checks for misconduct or serious complaint history, including any substantiated findings or disciplinary outcomes relating to harassment, discrimination, gender-based violence, bullying, abuse of authority, or other workplace or interpersonal safety breaches; and
h. any other checks deemed appropriate to a CEO-level appointment including checks relevant to the candidate's conduct, integrity and alignment with organisational values and workplace safety obligations.

Recommendation to Council

(32) The Committee will submit the Vice-Chancellor Selection Report (see clause 30) to Council, including:

a. summary of the process undertaken;
b. broad evaluation of shortlisted candidates without identifying individual applicants, to preserve candidate confidentiality (only the name of the preferred candidate to be provided);
c. outcomes of due diligence; and
d. a recommendation regarding the preferred candidate.

(33) Council will meet to consider the recommendation and may:

a. endorse the preferred candidate;
b. request further information; or
c. request continuation or recommencement of the search.

(34) Council should, where possible, reach consensus on the appointment. Where consensus cannot be reached, Council will determine the appointment by a resolution passed by a majority of Council members.

Appointment

(35) If Council endorses the preferred candidate:

a. the Chancellor will confirm the candidate's willingness to accept the appointment;
b. informal meet-and-greet sessions will be arranged between the preferred candidate and groups of Council members prior to any offer being finalised (each group would comprise one member of the Appointment Committee together with a mix of appointed and elected Council members) and the Committee may also arrange confidential engagement between the preferred candidate and other stakeholders as part of that process, including to inform Council's consideration of the candidate's cultural understanding and fit;
c. Council will formally approve the appointment (by resolution), subject to finalisation of the terms and conditions (see Clause 36); and
d. the appointment will be publicly announced in accordance with the communications plan (clause 17h), when the terms and conditions of appointment have been finalised.

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(36) The Chancellor's Committee will approve the terms and conditions of the appointment, including remuneration, consistent with any applicable legislative requirements.

(37) If the preferred candidate declines the appointment, Council may request the Vice-Chancellor Appointment Committee make a further recommendation or direct the Committee to recommence the process.

Commencement and Transition

(38) The Chancellor will manage the announcement of the new Vice-Chancellor following appointment.

(39) Transition arrangements must be agreed with the incumbent (if applicable).

(40) The onboarding and performance objectives of the incoming Vice-Chancellor must be set by the Chancellor's Committee.

Section 10 - Reappointment of the Vice-Chancellor

(41) The Vice-Chancellor may be eligible for reappointment, subject to the Act and terms of their original appointment.

(42) Council should determine whether to consider reappointment based on:

a. performance against agreed objectives;
b. leadership of the University's strategic direction; and
c. future organisational needs.

(43) Council may seek input from relevant stakeholders and/or independent advice to inform reappointment decisions.

(44) If Council supports reappointment, the Chancellor will seek the Vice-Chancellor's agreement and bring a recommendation to Council for approval.

Status and Details

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Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Daniel Bell General Counsel and Chief Governance Officer
Enquiries Contact	Hamish Lithgow University Secretary

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.