

Respect. Now. Always. Committee Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Establishment

(1) The Respect. Now. Always. Committee (the Committee) provides strategic governance oversight of the University's framework for preventing, responding to and addressing sexual harassment, sexual harm and gender-based violence affecting students, staff and the wider CDU community.

(2) The Committee supports the University to meet its obligations under The [National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence](#) (National Code) and is established under section 15 of the [Charles Darwin University Act 2003](#).

(3) The Committee is not responsible for the operational management or investigation of individual cases.

Section 2 - Functions and Responsibilities

Strategic oversight and governance

(4) The committee will:

- a. Provide strategic advice to the Vice-Chancellor and University Council on the University's approach to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual harm and gender-based violence.
- b. Oversee the development, implementation and periodic review of CDU's Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Plan.
- c. Monitor alignment of University policies, procedures and practices with the National Code and other regulatory requirements.

Assurance and risk

(5) The committee will:

- a. Receive and consider de-identified, aggregated data, trend analysis and reports relating to disclosures, reports, incidents and responses, for the purpose of governance assurance and risk management.
- b. Identify systemic risks, gaps or emerging issues and make recommendations to mitigate institutional risk.
- c. Provide assurance that trauma-informed, culturally safe and inclusive approaches are embedded in University systems.

Policy and continuous improvement

(6) The committee will:

- a. Endorse recommendations for improvements to policies, procedures, training and awareness initiatives relating to gender-based violence.

- b. Monitor the effectiveness of prevention initiatives, education programs and response pathways.
- c. Support continuous improvement through benchmarking and best-practice guidance in the higher education sector.

Reporting and accountability

(7) The committee will:

- a. Provide regular reports to University Council via the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee and the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee.
- b. Support the University's public reporting obligations under the National Code, subject to privacy, confidentiality and legal constraints.

Section 3 - Membership

(8) The membership of the Committee will comprise:

- a. Vice-Chancellor (Chair);
- b. Provost (Deputy Chair);
- c. Director Student Engagement;
- d. Director People and Culture;
- e. Associate Director Student Support;
- f. Deputy Director People and Employee Relations;
- g. Deputy Director Organisational Capability and Inclusion;
- h. Vice-President Governance and University Secretary;
- i. Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership (or representative);
- j. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection (or representative);
- k. Chief Marketing and Communications Officer (or representative);
- l. General Manager CDU Village;
- m. Four employee representatives, including at least one HE academic and at least one VET academic;
- n. An expert in gender-based violence prevention and response; and
- o. President of the Charles Dawin University Student Council (CDUSC).

(9) The Chair may invite additional attendees or subject-matter experts to attend meetings as required.

Members' attendance

(10) Attendance by members will be monitored by the secretary. If a member has three consecutive unexplained absences from committee meetings, the Chair will discuss with the Vice-President Governance and University Secretary their future participation as a member of the committee.

Section 4 - Chair

(11) The Vice-Chancellor will be the Chair of the Committee.

(12) If the Chair and Deputy Chair are unavailable, the members present will nominate an alternative Chair for the meeting.

Section 5 - Secretary

(13) Administrative and secretariat support will be provided by Student Success and Educational Excellence.

Section 6 - Term of Office

(14) Membership of the committee will be reviewed annually.

Section 7 - Quorum

(15) A quorum is constituted by 50 per cent plus one of the members.

Section 8 - Meetings

(16) The Committee will meet quarterly and may meet more frequently as required.

Member conduct

(17) Members are expected to maintain professional conduct at all times. The Chair may call members to order as required.

(18) All items of discussion will be treated as confidential.

Section 9 - Agenda

(19) The agenda and supporting documentation will normally be distributed at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

Section 10 - Meetings

(20) Meeting minutes and action items will be made available within two weeks of the meeting.

(21) Minutes will record the items discussed, key points, resolutions and the primary reasons for decisions.

Section 11 - Reporting

(22) The Committee reports to the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, a sub-committee of University Council.

(23) The Committee will provide:

- a. Regular reports to the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee on governance, risk, assurance and compliance matters relating to gender-based violence;
- b. Regular reports to University Council on the University's prevention and response framework and compliance with the [National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence](#); and
- c. Advice and escalation of material risks or issues to the Vice-Chancellor and University Council, as required.

Section 12 - Conflicts of Interest

(24) Members must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest at the commencement of discussion of an agenda item and manage the conflict in accordance with the [Conflicts of Interest Policy](#).

Section 13 - Non-compliance

(25) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct - Employees](#) or the [Code of Conduct - Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the [Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025](#) and the [Code of Conduct - Students](#).

(26) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the [Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees](#) and [Complaints Policy - Students](#).

(27) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	24th March 2026
Review Date	24th March 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	23rd March 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Committee Chair	Sarah Fletcher Director Student Engagement
Author	Matthew Giakoumatos Policy and Governance Officer 08 8946 7383
Enquiries Contact	Governance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called 'governance documents' and are often referred to as 'policy' or 'University policy'.

"Gender-based violence" - Gender-based violence means any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy. Gender-based violence includes many acts of violence that are based on gender, and might include physical violence or abuse; sexual violence, abuse or harassment; sex-based harassment; emotional or psychological abuse; verbal abuse or threats; economic or financial abuse; stalking or monitoring; intimate partner violence; family and domestic violence; technology-facilitated abuse; coercive control; sexual trafficking; reproductive coercion; female genital mutilation; forced medical interventions; forced marriage; and/or a pattern or patterns of abusive behaviour. Intimate relationships where one person has supervisory, oversight, academic, or other decision-making responsibilities in relation to the other person can amplify or give rise to gender-based violence, including relationships that are or appear to be consensual.