Design Authority Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Establishment

(1) The Design Authority (DA) is established by the Transformation Board.

Section 2 - Functions and responsibilities

(2) The Design Authority (DA) serves as the key arbitrator for all digital and technological solutions and design at Charles Darwin University (the University). The DA ensures that proposed solutions are thoroughly considered, adhere to design guidelines, and align with our future state digital environment as corresponding to University objectives.

(3) The DA:

a. Is responsible for assessing risks, impacts, issues and conflicts related to all proposed digital and technical design and is the final approver for all digital and technical design at CDU.
b. Maintains design integrity of enterprise architecture while accommodating design changes to existing systems by making informed decisions regarding acceptance or rejection to ensure alignment with strategic technology design to allow for a fit for purpose digital ecosystem.
c. Ensures that detailed design, build, testing, and implementation plans are compliant with CDU policy, procedures and standards.
d. Reviews, approves and maintains standards, frameworks and guidelines that all digital design must adhere to.

(4) The activities of the DA do not replace those of the Change Advisory Board (CAB).

Section 3 - Membership

(5) Membership of the DA will comprise:

Membership

a. Chief Information and Digital Officer;
b. Deputy Director Office of the CIDO;
c. Deputy Director Service Operations;
d. Chief Information Security Officer; and
e. Chief Enterprise Architect.

Acting members

(6) Persons acting in the capacity of a member of the DA will hold the rights and privileges of the member's position for the duration of their appointment.

(7) Acting membership will be drawn from:

a. Deputy Director Service Support;
b. Deputy Director Portfolio Transformation;
c. Cyber Security Architect;
d. Cloud & Applications Architect; and
e. Network & Infrastructure Architect.

Observers

(8) The secretary may invite observers to attend the DA for part or the whole of a meeting. Notification of the intention to attend must be provided (1) week before the meeting date.

Members' attendance

(9) Attendance by members will be monitored by the Secretary. If a member has three consecutive unexplained absences from DA 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

(10) The Chief Information Security and Digital Officer will be Chair of the DA.

(11) If the Chair is not available, the Deputy Director Office of the CIDO will act as Chair.

(12) The Chair will have control over the proceedings of DA meetings. These include:

a. Ensuring that proceedings are conducted in a proper and orderly manner.
b. Ensuring that all persons have the opportunity to be heard.
c. Ensuring observers only attend DA meetings at the invitation of the secretary.
d. Determining, in conjunction with other members at the meeting, if any DA member who has a conflict of interest is entitled to be present during deliberation on the matter.
e. Adjourning the meeting or formally declaring the meeting closed.

Section 5 - Secretary

(13) The secretary will be appointed by the Chair and will act in this role until the following meeting.

(14) The secretary will be responsible for ensuring that:

a. The agenda is distributed to DA membership.
b. Minutes are kept and distributed as the meeting is closed.
c. A paper is prepared for the Transformation Board requesting endorsement of any decision.
d. Outcome of endorsed decisions of the DA are made available to staff via CDU's internal intranet (Waterhole).

Section 6 - Terms of office

(15) Members of the Design Authority are members for the duration of their appointment to their position.

Section 7 - Quorum

(16) At a meeting of the DA quorum is constituted as 50% (of which two must be at the Deputy Director level or higher) plus one member of the DA.

(17) In circumstances whereby there are explained absences of members for two consecutive meetings the Chair may reserve the right to make decisions.

Section 8 - Meetings

(18) The DA shall convene monthly with members to review and approve proposals and standards. Meetings may be conducted in person or virtually, as determined by the availability and preferences of ex-officio membership.

(19) The DA will meet twice a year to review the technology roadmap. Additional meetings can be requested where warranted by project needs, a new discovery or shift in techniques, tools, platforms or frameworks.

(20) Short notice or emergency meetings are discouraged. If there is a genuine urgent requirement contact the Chair for discussion.

Decision making

(21) Decisions shall be made by consensus wherever possible.

(22) If consensus cannot be achieved a formal vote will be taken.

(23) If the vote is tied the Chair has the right to cast a deciding vote.

Section 9 - Member conduct

(24) Professional conduct of members is expected at all times. The Chair may call members to order as required.

(25) As required, members must treat items of discussion with confidentiality.

Section 10 - Agenda

(26) The agenda will be distributed with supporting documentation at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting date.

Section 11 - Minutes

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

(28) The minutes will detail the item under discussion, the main points of the discussion, the resolution reached and the primary reasons for reaching that determination.

(29) The minutes will go to the first available meeting of the Transformation Board.

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Section 12 - Reporting

(30) The Design Authority reports to the Transformation Board.

(31) Outcomes of endorsed decisions of the DA will be made available for CDU staff to view via CDU's internal intranet (Waterhole).

(32) Proponents will be informed of decisions directly.

Section 13 - Conflicts of interest

(33) Where a member has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest regarding an agenda item, they must declare this to the Chair at the commencement of discussion of the item, and be prepared to excuse themselves from the discussion, or the room, if required, as per the terms of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Section 14 - Non-compliance

(34) 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.

(35) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(36) 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

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