

Introduction

As part of its commitment to responsible innovation, the University of New England (UNE) has established the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance Committee to oversee the ethical, transparent, and effective integration of AI technologies across the University.

This charter serves as a guiding framework for the Committee's operations, ensuring that AI initiatives align with UNE's mission and values while addressing emerging risks and opportunities. By fostering collaboration and accountability, the Committee aims to support UNE's goal of leveraging AI to enhance academic and institutional excellence while maintaining a fundamentally human-centered environment.

The AI Governance Committee operates under UNE's Institutional AI Policy and is responsible for supporting and operationalizing that policy, the AI Acceptable Use Policy, the AI Policy Guidance for Faculty, the AI Policy Guidance for Students, and the Guidance for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research. The Committee's scope covers all institutional uses of AI, including teaching and learning, research and clinical activity, administrative and student support operations, and emerging agentic AI systems.

Committee Guiding Principles

- **Alignment with Institutional Values:** AI governance practices will align with UNE's core values by fostering academic excellence through the responsible use of AI, while preserving a fundamentally human-centered University environment.
- **Commitment to Ethical Stewardship:** The Committee is dedicated to upholding ethical standards and accountability in all AI-related decisions, ensuring that AI use reflects the University's commitment to integrity, fairness, and respect for individual rights.
- **Proactive Risk Management:** The Committee will support UNE's overall risk management efforts related to AI technologies, ensuring that policies, guidelines, and strategies are in place to promote compliance, safeguard privacy, and encourage responsible use.
- **Fostering Collaboration:** Active collaboration with faculty, professional staff, students, and external experts is essential for informed decision-making. The Committee will engage a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that AI governance practices reflect the collective values and needs of the UNE community.
- **Promoting AI Education and Awareness:** The Committee will champion efforts to increase understanding of AI across the UNE community by supporting initiatives that foster AI literacy, encourage informed engagement, and promote awareness of both opportunities and challenges associated with AI technologies.

Committee Membership

The Committee is composed of the following individuals, representing a wide range of roles and expertise within the University:

- Sarah Delage, Associate Vice President of Communications
- Elizabeth Dyer, Dean of Library Services
- Marc Ebenfield, Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- James Herbert, President
- Karen Houseknecht, Vice President for Research and Innovation
- Jim Irwin, Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- Bobbie Kallner, Vice President of Human Resources and Chief Human Resources Officer
- Debra Leahy, Interim Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost
- Tara Paradie, Director of Clinical Education, Associate Clinical Professor, Department of Physical Therapy
- Colin Pears, Associate Provost of Student Success and Chief Retention Officer
- JP Pestana, University Registrar
- Wes Renfro, Dean College of Arts and Sciences
- Ron Schneider, General Counsel
- Jennifer J. Stiegler-Balfour, Professor, Psychology
- Dawn Stoyanoff, Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
- Beth Taylor-Nolan, Dean, College of Professional Studies
- Matthew Witten, Chief Information Security Officer and Director of Information Security

Committee members are expected to serve a one-year term, renewable at the discretion of the Executive Oversight Subcommittee, consisting of the President, Provost, and CFO. The Committee reserves the right to appoint additional members or technical experts as needed to address emerging challenges or provide specialized knowledge. The Committee may also establish subcommittees to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities. Members must disclose any conflicts of interest related to AI vendors or projects and must recuse themselves from deliberations and decisions in which a conflict exists.

Key Responsibilities

- **Policy Development and Review:** Develop, review, and recommend policies to the Executive Oversight Subcommittee governing the use of AI technologies to ensure alignment with UNE's mission, values, and regulatory requirements.
- **AI Tool and Use Case Prioritization and Request Evaluation:** Create and implement a framework for evaluating and prioritizing AI tool and use case requests.

- **Communication of AI Decisions and Tools:** Communicate major decisions, approved AI tools, and governance updates in accessible, plain language to support broad understanding and adoption across the University.
- **Risk Strategy Execution:** Define and oversee risk tolerance and appetite as part of UNE's AI strategy, helping ensure that risk-related decisions align with organizational priorities.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Facilitate collaboration with faculty, professional staff, students, and external experts as needed to gather diverse perspectives on AI implementation, supporting alignment with UNE community needs.
- **Education and Awareness:** Advocate for initiatives that promote AI literacy and understanding among UNE stakeholders, supporting responsible and informed use of AI technologies.

Meeting Protocols

The Committee will convene at least monthly, with flexibility for additional ad hoc sessions as needed. Meetings may be in person, virtual, or hybrid to maximize participation. Agendas will be prepared and circulated in advance, allowing members to contribute items and review relevant materials prior to each meeting. Minutes will be recorded and distributed to document discussions, decisions, and action items.

Decision-Making Authority

The Committee will recommend decisions through collaborative discussion, encouraging input and ideas from all members. Decisions are typically reached by consensus; however, if consensus cannot be achieved on recommendations, the Executive Oversight Subcommittee will ultimately make the decision. The Committee may recommend policies, advise on AI tool adoption, and guide strategic initiatives. Input from relevant stakeholders may be solicited and considered in the decision-making process to ensure that outcomes reflect the needs and values of the UNE community.

Charter Review and Revision

The AI Governance Committee is responsible for conducting an annual review and assessment of this Charter's adequacy, recommending any improvements deemed necessary to ensure its continued effectiveness. This process will involve gathering feedback from stakeholders across the University to identify areas for enhancement and alignment with emerging best practices in AI governance. Last updated August 20, 2026.