

Management and accountability

Risk management

In 2025, UTS further enhanced its enterprise risk management framework, which aligns with international standards (ISO 31000:2018, Risk management – Guidelines). This framework continues to support all aspects of university operations, including academic activities, research, change initiatives, financial planning and legal compliance.

Building on the progress made in 2024, UTS has strengthened its risk maturity by adapting to evolving operational and external risk landscapes. Through a continued focus on fostering a risk-aware culture, the university has improved decision-making processes, enhanced asset protection and reinforced stakeholder confidence.

In 2025, all staff members at UTS continue to play a vital role in risk management, ensuring that risks are identified, assessed and managed within the university's defined risk appetite. By fostering a culture of informed risk-taking, UTS has strengthened its ability to navigate challenges and drive innovation and sustainable growth and success.

UTS continued to advance its enterprise risk management framework this year by building on improvements made in 2024. Key enhancements undertaken included:

- updating the risk taxonomy to ensure comprehensive and contemporary coverage of strategic, operational, academic and compliance risks, improving the clarity and consistency of risk identification and reporting across the university
- strengthening risk governance through clearer articulation of roles and responsibilities of UTS Council and its committees and the University Leadership Team in risk oversight, monitoring and the effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies
- enhancing business continuity management practices to improve organisational resilience and the university's capacity to maintain critical operations in response to disruption
- strengthening controls around cybersecurity and data governance risks, reflecting the evolving threat landscape and the university's obligations in relation to information security and privacy
- commencing the transition to risk-based audits, aligning internal audit activity more closely with the university's risk profile to provide greater assurance over the areas of highest risk
- continuing to expand periodic external threat landscape scans to proactively identify emerging risks and strengthen organisational resilience
- continuing investment in on-the-job training of staff on risk management through periodic risk and opportunity review processes.

In 2025, UTS further advanced its approach to integrate insurance as a financial protection against risks. This allowed UTS to strengthen risk mitigation strategies that balance prevention, control and financial protection for risks that cannot be fully mitigated.

UTS maintains a comprehensive insurance program to cover the university and its controlled entities. These include:

- financial lines (including directors and officers, cyber, medical malpractice, commercial crime, professional indemnity, employment practices liability)
- public, products and environmental liabilities
- property and asset protection and business interruption
- accident and health (including travel insurance)
- staff and students international health and security management through the university's travel security and emergency services provider.

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Attestation Statement

This annual statement attests that the UTS Council is satisfied that the university:

- has a policy that upholds academic freedom and freedom of expression as paramount values, as required under the Model Code
- maintains an institutional environment in which academic freedom and freedom of expression are upheld and protected
- addresses questions in relation to the management of academic freedom and freedom of expression issues promptly, actively and in good faith.

UTS respects and promotes academic freedom and freedom of expression through its Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Policy. The policy makes clear UTS's position to uphold academic freedom and freedom of expression as paramount values that meet the requirements of the Model Code.

The policy is supported by commitments outlined in other university-wide policies, notably the Code of Conduct (for staff), the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (for students) and the Equity, Inclusion and Respect Policy (for all members of the UTS community). The principles and values embodied in these policies contribute to an institutional environment that protects academic freedom and freedom of expression at UTS.

Further, academic freedom and freedom of expression are covered under UTS's enterprise agreements.

Under the UTS Act, the object of the university includes the promotion of free inquiry and its principal functions include participation in public discourse. Universities have a duty to foster open robust debate, while maintaining a civil, respectful and safe environment.

Through our Speak Up at UTS website we continue to encourage our staff, students, affiliates and members of the community to come forward when they identify something is wrong or to report any concerns, including incidents of intimidation or harassment when exercising their academic freedom and freedom of expression.

In providing this statement of attestation, UTS reaffirms its commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression, while safeguarding the wellbeing of students and staff.

Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities

In December 2024, the University Chancellors Council approved a revised Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities, which replaced the 2018 Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Public Universities.

The revised code was adopted by UTS Council in April 2025. This is UTS's first annual compliance assessment against the revised code.

The assessment found that UTS is fully compliant with the majority of the code's 20 provisions. A small number of areas requiring ongoing attention as part of a continuous improvement approach to governance were identified, including strengthening First Peoples representation and engagement in governance and progressing arrangements for a public conflict of interest register. The university has chosen not to appoint independent external directors to the board of its controlled entity, UTS Global, based on an assessment of the entity's size, risk profile and operational complexity.

UTS will continue to review its compliance with the code on an annual basis.

International travel

The following table summarises the number of international trips undertaken by university staff during the reporting period. The table classifies these trips by the primary purpose of travel and by geographical destination.

	Learning and development	Teaching and related activities	Research and related activities	Total
East Asia	32	170	139	341
South-East Asia	22	126	138	286
Europe	35	23	182	240
North America	20	16	109	145
Oceania	4	23	111	138
Middle East	21	12	64	97
South Asia	2	20	18	40
Africa	2	1	7	10
South America	-	1	8	9
Central Asia	-	1	-	1
Total	138	406	776	1307

Senior executive numbers and remuneration

The basis of preparation for this disclosure may differ from the financial statements in volume 2, which follow Australian Accounting Standards.

Number of senior executive staff

	2024		2025	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Vice Chancellor	-	1	-	1
Provost	1	-	2 ¹	-
Deputy Vice-Chancellor	3	2	3	2
Chief Operating Officer	-	1	-	1
Total	4	4	5	4

1. Two people held the role of Provost in 2025, who each held the role at different times.

Average senior executive salary

	Average total remuneration package ¹		Percentage of total employee-related expenditure that relates to senior executives	
	2024	2025	2024	2025
Vice-Chancellor and President	\$936,648	\$932,433 ²	0.12%	0.11%
Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Chief Operating Officer	\$530,732	\$519,641	0.43% ³	0.38% ³

1. Total remuneration package includes base salary and superannuation, excluding termination payments.

2. The Vice-Chancellor's salary in 2025 comprised a base salary of \$779,323.22, superannuation of \$132,485.08 and 2024 individual performance arrangement of \$20,625.

3. Percentage reflects total remuneration for Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Chief Operating Officer against total employee related expenses.

Legal change

New legislation

New requirements for preventing and responding to gender-based violence

The Australian Government introduced the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025 (Cth) (Code) on 1 January 2026. The Code requires higher education providers to prevent and respond to gender-based violence through defined standards, which focus on leadership, mechanisms for safety and support in university environments and evidence to inform and measure the university's approach. Prevention and responses are required to be proportionate, safe and trauma informed.

Civil penalties apply for non-compliance, and regulatory action may be taken by TEQSA, for failure to meet provider obligations under the Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth).

Changes to the rules for international education agents and overseas courses

The Australian Government has amended the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) to strengthen transparency regarding the recruitment of students by education agents. The change requires the university to notify TEQSA of ownership or control of an education agent, maintain and publish a list of the education agents it works with, and authorises TEQSA to seek information regarding the commission paid to them.

A related amendment to the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth) bans commissions from being paid to education agents for the recruitment of overseas students who have commenced their study with another registered provider in Australia. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth) has also been amended to require authorisation from TEQSA for overseas higher award courses and prescribed reporting.

New regulatory tools related to workplace obligations and student grievances and complaints

TEQSA published 2 Statements of Regulatory Expectations (SRE) in 2025 that outline expectations for providers regarding workplace obligations and student grievance and complaint mechanisms. Universities are now required to submit an annual report providing evidence of compliance for its workplace obligations SRE, which must be attested by the Vice-Chancellor. The report will be required for an initial period of 2 years, with expansion of reporting requirements dependent upon the sector's demonstrated management of risks.

TEQSA recommends annual public reporting of de-identified student complaints data under its student complaints SRE. It may consider other reporting mechanisms, depending on the adoption of the voluntary reporting recommendation. The SREs should inform self-assurance of related obligations in the Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 (Cth) and that it may require providers to demonstrate progress towards meeting the expectations.

Removal of exemption for fixed-term contracts

The pre-existing higher education exemption from the fixed-term contract provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) were repealed on 31 October 2025. UTS must now comply with requirements for fixed-term contracts for similar work, including a time limit of 2 years in total for any contract, its extension or renewal and a limit of one option to extend. Exceptions may still apply under the Act, for example in relation to certain government-funded roles or the temporary absence of another employee.

Limit on claims for work-related psychological injury

The NSW Government has implemented changes to the Workers Compensation Act 1987 (NSW) to limit compensation payable in relation to psychological injuries received at work. The date for implementation of these reforms has not yet been determined. The amendments clarify and expand the scope of the exemption of reasonable management action and limit the type of events for which compensation for psychological injury may be payable. They also require that the employment is the main contributing factor to the injury. Weekly benefits payable for psychological injury are restricted, unless there is a significant ongoing injury.

Significant cases

Fair Work Ombudsman v University of New South Wales [2025] FedCFamC2G 2151

In *Fair Work Ombudsman v University of New South Wales*, the Federal Circuit and Family Court held that UNSW contravened the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) by failing over an extended period to make and keep proper time, pay and casual loading records, and by issuing non-compliant payslips to casual academic staff. The Court imposed civil penalties totalling \$213,120, notwithstanding UNSW's remediation efforts and cooperation with the regulator.

Charles Sturt University v NTEU [2025] FWC 3731

In *Charles Sturt University v NTEU*, the Fair Work Commission held that CSU was not required to consult under its enterprise agreement merely because it decided to reduce expenditure, as that decision did not constitute a firm proposal for workplace change. The obligation to consult arose only once CSU developed specific and concrete change proposals, which it was entitled to do progressively and by business unit.

Shapkin v University of Sydney [2025] NSWCA 100

Shapkin v University of Sydney concerned whether a student evicted from university-owned accommodation was protected by the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW). The Court of Appeal held that the student occupied the premises as a lodger rather than a tenant, and that the accommodation constituted a 'hall of residence' exempt from the Act under the Residential Tenancies Regulation. The Court confirmed that physical occupation of the premises by the owner was not required; the relevant consideration was the university's retained legal and operational control. Leave to appeal was refused, with costs ordered against the applicant.

Toltz v Keane [2025] FCA 1386; Toltz v Riemer [2025] FCA 1385

Jewish staff and students commenced proceedings alleging racial vilification under section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) arising from public statements and publications made by 2 University of Sydney academics in the context of Israel–Palestine discourse. The applicants allege that the University of Sydney is vicariously liable for aspects of the conduct and failed to adequately protect Jewish staff and students during campus protests and related events. The claims are denied and the proceedings remain ongoing.

The 2025 decisions are interlocutory in nature. The Federal Court addressed procedural and pleading issues, including the scope of claims, amendments, representative proceedings and applications for summary dismissal. The Court did not determine whether section 18C was contravened or whether the university bears liability.

Stella v Griffith University [2025] [2025] QCATA 20; Stella v Griffith University [2025] QCA 203; Stella v Griffith University [2025] QCAT 469

Mr Stella sought access to documents under Queensland’s information privacy and right to information regime relating to a university complaint process concerning his social media conduct. After the Information Commissioner and QCATA largely upheld Griffith University’s access refusals, Mr Stella sought leave to appeal to the Queensland Court of Appeal. Leave was refused, with the Court holding that the proposed grounds raised no pure question of law. The decisions confirmed that a university’s handling of student misconduct complaints may constitute a management function for the purposes of public interest nondisclosure, and that internal documents generated in processing access applications may, in the circumstances, fall outside the scope of further access requests.

Privacy

UTS is bound by the 12 information protection principles contained within the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) (PPIP Act). This Act covers the university in relation to how it manages personal information on or after 1 July 2000, and health information on or after 1 July 2000 until 1 September 2004.

UTS is also bound by the 15 health privacy principles contained within the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW) (HRIP Act). This Act covers the university in relation to how it manages health information on or after 1 September 2004.

Although UTS is not directly covered by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), its principles may apply in certain circumstances in relation to university activities that are governed by other federal legislation or codes of practice, as well as data breach reporting in relation to certain types of information. Similarly, in some cases, provisions of the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), China’s Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL), or other cross-jurisdictional privacy laws in other countries, may apply to data in some limited activities.

How UTS manages personal and health information

The management of personal and health information is primarily governed by the university’s Privacy Policy and the Privacy Management Plan. The Privacy Management Plan is required under the PPIP Act and is essentially a statement of how UTS complies with both New South Wales privacy acts.

The plan includes information about:

- UTS policies and practices that govern privacy
- training and information programs for staff
- how UTS will comply with information protection and health privacy principles including details of how UTS collects, uses and protects information, and examples of when information may be disclosed
- details of the university’s internal review process, and
- a summary of the types of information UTS collects and holds.

Both the policy and the plan are available on the university’s public website. Privacy is also supported by the Data Breach Policy, Data Governance Policy, Records Management Policy, Artificial Intelligence Operations Policy, and other activity-based policies which may include privacy requirements where appropriate.

More specific information may also be provided to individuals through privacy notices (collection statements) provided to individuals at the time their information is collected. These notices will explain what is being collected, how that information will be used, if it is expected to be disclosed, and individual’s rights. Key privacy notices can be readily located from the privacy link in the university’s website footer.

Activities during 2025

- We continue to focus on building privacy into information system design and development as part of the project planning stage. Privacy is considered of high importance by project teams in this space where a new system may involve personal or health information.
- Our Privacy Contact Network continued with 2 sessions held for our privacy champions across the university.
- Further work has been undertaken to streamline and refine our privacy content and transparency communications. In particular, consolidating key privacy notices, with a focus on reviewing our employee privacy notice during 2025.
- We continue to improve data retention by reviewing records and data collections to ensure they can be destroyed when they are no longer required to be retained, and ensuring they are stored in appropriate systems while ongoing retention is required.
- Data-related incidents were considered in line with the Data Breach Policy, and notification obligations were assessed and applied where required. An annual review of the Data Breach Policy was conducted with minor amendments applied in December 2025.

Internal reviews

UTS completed 2 formal privacy internal reviews during 2025 under section 53 of the PPIP Act. These reviews were conducted within the required timelines and framework of the university's obligations under the PPIP Act.

Right to information

Review of proactive release program

Under section 7 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act), agencies must review their programs for the release of government information to identify the kinds of information that can be made publicly available.

UTS's program for the proactive release of information involves decisions made at the business activity level regarding what information to make public on the university's website. Consideration of proactive release is undertaken on an ongoing basis, and considered annually by the right to information team. Information relating to ongoing business and key projects and activities considered of interest to the wider community is proactively released on the UTS website.

- News: The UTS Newsroom includes news stories of interest, including media releases, and informs the public of activities happening at UTS.
- Sustainability: UTS strives to continually improve its sustainability performance. Information is available on the UTS website about our targets, performance and sustainability-related activities.

- Facts, figures and ratings: Information known to be of interest to the public includes information on the university's rankings, and facts and figures including information on student numbers, diversity, performance and completion rates, and graduate employment. This information is released for the benefit of past, present and future students, as well as donors, partners and supporters.
- Governance: The GIPA Act requires certain governance information to be made public, such as policy documents. These are available on the UTS website. Additional governance information is proactively released to inform staff, students and members of the public about the governance frameworks at UTS and important university decisions. Governance information proactively released includes information about the UTS Council and Academic Board and associated committees.
- Strategy: Information on the UTS 2030 strategy and our strategic priorities is available on the UTS website.

Information was released to the university community via the internal SharePoint site, including links to information released under the GIPA Act, in relation to the operational sustainability initiative.

In addition to the above, the review focused on trends identified through requests for information, including applications under the GIPA Act. Any information available regarding informal requests was also considered. No trends in requests were identified. As a result, no further information was proactively released.

Number of access applications received

In 2025, UTS received a total of 22 access applications, of which 20 became valid access applications. An additional 7 requests were dealt with as informal requests, one of which was a formal application that was withdrawn.

No applications processed in 2025 were carried over from 2024, although two 2025 reviews resulted from applications decided in 2024.

At the end of 2025, 5 applications were active and carried over into 2026.

Number of refused applications for Schedule 1 information

During the reporting period, only one application included information refused due to a conclusive public interest against disclosure under Schedule 1 to the GIPA Act.

Statistical information about access applications

Table A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome¹

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Media	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not-for-profit organisations or community groups	3	3	2	2	1	0	0	0
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Members of the public (other)	4	5	2	2	1	0	0	0

1. More than one decision may be made in respect of a particular access application. Where this is the case, each decision is individually recorded.

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome¹

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Personal information applications ²	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	6	8	3	3	2	0	0	0
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0

1. More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. Where this is the case, each decision is individually recorded.

2. A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the GIPA Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

Table C: Invalid applications

Reason for invalidity	Number
Application does not comply with formal requirements (s 41)	4
Application is for excluded information of the agency (s 43)	0
Application contravenes restraint order (s 110)	0
Total number of invalid applications received	4
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	2

Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 to the GIPA Act¹

Overriding public interest against disclosure	Number of times consideration used
Overriding secrecy laws	0
Cabinet information	0
Executive Council information	0
Contempt	0
Legal professional privilege	1
Excluded information	0
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0
Transport safety	0
Adoption	0
Care and protection of children	0
Ministerial code of conduct	0
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0
Information about complaints to Judicial Commission	0
Information about authorised transactions under Electricity Network Assets (Authorised Transactions) Act 2015	0
Information about authorised transaction under Land and Property Information NSW (Authorised Transaction) Act 2016	0

1. More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application).

Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of the GIPA Act¹

Public interest considerations against disclosure	Number of occasions when application not successful¹
Responsible and effective government	4
Law enforcement and security	0
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	7
Business interests of agencies and other persons	6
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0
Secrecy provisions	0
Exempt documents under interstate freedom of information legislation	0

1. More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application).

Table F: Timeliness

Timeliness	Number of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	14
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	1 ¹
Total	15²

1. One access application was completed 5 working days after the due date. Attempts were made to negotiate an extension with the applicant but no response was received from them until after the application was decided.

2. Five remaining applications were not decided in 2025, and were carried over into 2026.

Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the GIPA Act (by type of review and outcome)

Type of review	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total
Internal review	1	0	1
Review by Information Commissioner	2	0	2 ¹
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of the GIPA Act	0	0	0
Review by NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal	0	0	0
Total	3	0	3

1. Two reviews by the Information Commissioner were referred back and addressed as a reconsideration/new application during 2025.

Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the GIPA Act (by type of applicant)

Type of applicant	Number of applications for review
Applications by access applicants	3
Applications by people to whom information the subject of access application relates (s 54)	1

Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies under Division 2 of Part 4 of the GIPA Act (by type of transfer)

Type of transfer	Number of applications transferred
Agency-initiated transfers	0
Applicant-initiated transfers	0