

Professor Andrew O’Neil appointed Chair of Academic Board

Australian Catholic University (ACU) Senate has appointed Professor Andrew O’Neil as the new Chair of Academic Board.

Professor O’Neil will start in the position on 25 May 2026, replacing outgoing Chair Professor Tim McKenry, who has held the position since 2020.

Professor O’Neil is a senior academic leader at Australian Catholic University, currently serving as Professor and Dean of Graduate Research and International within the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). He will continue in this role on a fractional basis while serving as Chair of Academic Board.

He has held a range of senior positions across the higher education sector, including Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law and Business at ACU and leadership roles at Griffith University, including Dean (Research), Acting Dean of the Graduate Research School, Head of School and Director of the Griffith Asia Institute.

He is an accomplished researcher, whose work focuses on international relations, security, and public policy. Professor O’Neil has a substantial publication record and competitive research funding portfolio. He has also contributed to national policy through appointments with the Australian Research Council and other government and advisory bodies.

Over his years at ACU, Professor O’Neil has demonstrated his commitment to ACU’s distinctive identity and mission as a Catholic university, drawing on a centuries long intellectual tradition which prioritises the education of the whole person and the collaboration between academic disciplines. He is personally committed to enhancing the university’s impact by promoting equity and diversity, and the dialogue between faith and reason.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis congratulated Professor O’Neil on his appointment.

“Professor O’Neil has an in-depth understanding of the higher education landscape, and is dedicated to academic quality, high impact research and course innovation.

“His experience spans school, faculty, and university-wide levels, with a strong focus on governance, quality assurance, policy development, and academic performance.

“Professor O’Neil is widely recognised for his collaborative and collegial leadership, underpinned by a commitment to transparency, accountability, and academic integrity.

“He has extensive experience chairing committees, and a strong understanding of university governance frameworks, including the interaction between academic boards, executive leadership, and governing bodies.

“I look forward to working with him as Chair.”

Professor Skrbis paid tribute to outgoing Academic Board Chair, Professor Tim McKenry.

MEDIA RELEASE

21 May 2026



“I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Professor McKenry’s leadership of the Academic Board since 2020, and thank him for his significant contribution,” Professor Skrbis said.

“Professor McKenry has served on the ACU Academic Board since 2018 and is a founding member of the university’s AI Council. During his two terms as Chair, he led the university’s TEQSA renewal of registration and drove improvements in teaching, research and service across the university.”

The Chair of Academic Board plays an integral role in achieving the university’s mission and strategic objectives.

A host of committees report into the Academic Board, which plays a pivotal role in providing academic leadership, efficient governance and communication between the academic community and the university’s senior executive.

The role of Chair of Academic Board holds an ex-officio seat on the Senate, the university’s most senior governing body.

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