



University of New England

Agency Information Guide 2024

as at 08 January 2024

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1. Background

The University is required under section 20 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* ("the GIPA Act") to have an information guide that:

- (a) describes the structure and functions of the agency, and
- (b) describes the ways in which the functions (including, in particular, the decision-making functions) of the agency affect members of the public, and
- (c) specifies any arrangements that exist to enable members of the public to participate in the formulation of the agency's policy and the exercise of the agency's functions, and
- (d) identifies the various kinds of government information held by the agency, and
- (e) identifies the kinds of government information held by the agency that the agency makes (or will make) publicly available, and
- (f) specifies the manner in which the agency makes (or will make) government information publicly available, and
- (g) identifies the kinds of information that are (or will be) made publicly available free of charge and those kinds for which a charge is (or will be) imposed.

2. Structure and Functions

About the University

UNE is a statutory body established under the *University of New England Act 1993* (NSW) ("the Act") and its by-laws. In accordance with the Act, the University comprises the UNE Council, Convocation as per s4(c) and (d) of the Act.

The main campus is located in Armidale, NSW, on approximately 260 hectares of bushland. In addition to our sites at UNE Tamworth, UNE Taree and UNE Sydney (Parramatta), UNE has a network of Regional Study Centres across New England and North West NSW (Located at Coonabarabran, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Guyra, Inverell, Tenterfield and Moree) and a growing international network of teaching partners using the latest technologies to bring the best academic experiences to students anywhere in the world.

UNE's academic staff have developed strong networks of international research partners and continue to deliver improvements in agriculture, environmental sciences, mental health, education, local government, and productivity to communities not only in rural and regional Australia, but also across the developed and developing world.

Collaborative research is also reflected in UNE's strong industry links and knowledge partnerships with Cooperative Research Centres including Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, Centre for Innovation in Regional Health, Cotton Research and Development Corporation, CRC for Beef Genetic Technologies, CRC For Remote Economic Participation, CRC for Spatial Information, Centre for Invasive Species Solutions and Food Agility.

Other flagship research centres that inform UNE's research and engagement agenda include the Animal and Genetics Breeding Unit (AGBU); the Centre for Agriculture and Law (AgLaw); the Centre of Agribusiness; the Centre for Local Government; Centre for Rural Criminology; Cotton Hub at UNE; Manna Institute, New England Institute of Healthcare Research (NEIHR); the Palaeoscience Research Centre; PoultryHub Australia; SMART Farms; and the National Centre of Science, Information and Communication Technology and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR).

Functions

As stated in section 6 of the *University of New England Act 1993* (NSW), the object of UNE is the promotion, within the limits of the University's resources, of scholarship, research, free inquiry, the interaction of research and teaching, and academic excellence. To achieve this object, UNE has the following principal functions:

- (a) the provision of facilities for education and research of university standard;
- (b) the encouragement of the dissemination, advancement, development and application of knowledge informed by free inquiry;
- (c) the provision of courses of study or instruction across a range of fields, and the carrying out of research, to meet the needs of the community;
- (d) the participation in public discourse;
- (e) the conferring of degrees, including those of Bachelor, Master and Doctor, and the awarding of diplomas, certificates and other awards;
- (f) the provision of teaching and learning that engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry; and
- (g) the development of governance, procedural rules, admission policies, financial arrangements and quality assurance processes that are underpinned by the values and goals referred to in the functions set out in this subsection, and that are sufficient to ensure the integrity of the University's academic programs.

Other functions are that UNE:

- (a) may exercise commercial functions comprising the commercial exploitation or development, for UNE's benefit, of any facility, resource or property of UNE or in which UNE has a right or interest (including, for example, study, research, knowledge and intellectual property and the

practical application of study, research, knowledge and intellectual property), whether alone or with others;

- (b) may develop and provide cultural, sporting, professional, technical and vocational services to the community;
- (c) has such general and ancillary functions as may be necessary or convenient for enabling or assisting UNE to promote the object and interests of UNE, or as may complement or be incidental to the promotion of the object and interests of UNE; and
- (d) has such other functions as are conferred or imposed on it by or under this or any other Act.

The functions of UNE may be exercised within or outside the State, including outside Australia.

Organisational Structure and University Governance

Organisation Chart

The Organisational Structure for UNE can be found at https://www.une.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/25901/UNE-Organisational-Structure-32.pdf Further information on the structure of the University, including portfolios of responsibility, faculties, and campuses can be accessed through the About UNE tab on the University webpage at <http://www.une.edu.au/about-une>.

There is a hierarchy of information that prescribes how UNE is governed and managed:

- Legislation – *University of New England Act 1993* (NSW) No 68; *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Commonwealth).
- By-Laws – made under authority of the *University of New England Act 1993* (NSW) and approved by the Governor of NSW.
- Rules – power is given by the Act/By-Laws to the UNE Council to make rules, and to empower the Vice-Chancellor to make rules (a rule is an instrument of governance).
- Policies – policies are made in respect of matters that are within the powers under which rules are made. The Council has outlined the matters on which it retains authority and outlined the powers of the Vice-Chancellor to establish policies. A policy is a formal statement outlining how a matter is to be administered and/or regulated.
- Management plans – describe how a matter or a policy is to be arranged and/or managed, and are made by a director or a senior executive and approved by the supervisor of that office.
- Guidelines – are generally shorter documents that explain how a policy is to be enacted, and are made by a director or a senior executive and approved by that office's supervisor.
- Operating procedures – describe how a matter (which need not be a policy) is to be administered. These are made by a director or a senior executive and approved by that office's supervisor.

Council

The UNE Council is the University's governing authority and has functions conferred upon it by the Act. Under its powers of delegation, the Council establishes Committees of Council that are

responsible for the analysis, review and endorsement of recommendations from the University's management, as well as for the identification of organisational risk and opportunities.

The aim of the University Council and its committees is to oversee the operation of UNE for the benefit of its students, staff, academic community and the wider community as a whole. The Council may make rules in relation to any activity or function of the University provided they are consistent with the Act and University by-laws.

The Council seeks to make decisions that contribute to the learning environment and the interests of the University's stakeholders in a positive and transparent manner.

Academic Board

The Academic Board oversees academic governance at the University. It monitors the standards and quality assurance of the University's academic programs, advises the Council and Vice-Chancellor on academic matters, and provides a forum for discussion on teaching and research-related issues.

Further information on Council and Academic Board can be accessed through the University Academic Board webpage at <https://www.une.edu.au/about-une/governance/academic-board>.

Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor is the University's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and is responsible for the management of the University and the implementation of the University's Strategic Plan.

The role of the Vice-Chancellor is determined by the Act and includes official membership of the University's Council. The Vice-Chancellor has charge of the UNE's administrative and financial activities and manages the direction of the University's corporate planning, budget activities, and the implementation of policy.

The Vice-Chancellor reports directly to the Chancellor and the University Council and provides supervision to, and receives support from, a team of senior executives who provide strategic, policy and operational advice relating to their individual portfolios.

Further information on the Vice-Chancellor can be accessed through the Vice Chancellor's webpage at <http://www.une.edu.au/about-une/executive/vice-chancellor>.

3. The University and the public

How UNE's functions affect the public

UNE affects the public through its major functions such as the conferring of degrees, enrolment of students, employment of staff, the promotion of research and its involvement in the general community.

The University is a cultural and educational hub, but is also part of the local communities and surrounding districts. Its gardens and public spaces, culture and recreational facilities are open to all visitors and local residents. The University's theatres host lectures, talks, exhibitions and performances. UNE's Museums and Dixon Library house both permanent and temporary exhibitions. The University's Dixon Library is also open to the public to browse and use library books and journals (borrowing is not publicly available), making photocopies (for a fee), viewing microfilm material, and asking for advice and assistance in searching for information.

The public is defined here as the staff and students (past, present and future) of UNE, along with those people who have previously or who are presently serving on committees and any interested members of the community.

General enquiries and feedback can be made through the Contact Us tab on the webpage at <http://www.une.edu.au/contact-us>.

How the public may participate in UNE's policy development

Any member of the public can influence UNE's policy development by:

- (a) becoming a member of the relevant committee that is responsible for policy formulation and change; or
- (b) approaching the Chair of the relevant committee and through them seeking to change policy; or
- (c) applying to the Vice-Chancellor in writing, requesting that a certain matter be raised or a policy be changed.

Members of the University community may attend the open sessions of the meetings of Council as observers. Currently the Council has established the Standing Committee, Finance and Infrastructure Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Innovation and Development Committee, Remuneration Committee, Nominations Committee, and Honorary Degrees Titles and Tributes Committee.

Further information on Council can be accessed through the UNE Council webpage at <https://www.une.edu.au/about-une/governance/une-council>.

Further information on contacting the Vice-Chancellor can be accessed through the Vice-Chancellor's webpage at <http://www.une.edu.au/about-une/executive/vice-chancellor>.

4. Information held by the University

UNE is required to keep full and accurate records of its business activities. It holds records of its teaching and research functions and associated governance and administrative activities. This information is located primarily in the Records Management Office and also in central administration, faculties and schools. The records deal with matters such as:

- Approvals for courses of study and curricula
- Staff appointments
- Student admission and progression
- Examination and assessment
- Quality assurance and professional development
- Course delivery
- Fellowships and scholarships
- Donations
- Research administration and data
- Intellectual property administration and management
- Research Centres
- Student and staff support
- Student and staff discipline

- Convocation
- Operation of faculties and other business units
- University governance
- University infrastructure

5. Making information publically available

The University makes information publically available in the following ways:

- As Open Access Information (accessible free of charge on the website)
- Through proactively released information (accessible free of charge on the website)
- Through an informal application (free of charge), and
- Through formal applications under privacy legislation or the GIPA Act (fees apply)

Open Access Information & Proactively Released Information:

- This Information Guide
- Information about the University contained in any document tabled in Parliament by or on behalf of the University other than any document tabled by order of either House of Parliament
- The University's
 - Contracts register and disclosure log
 - Strategic plan
 - Policy Register and policies
 - Calendar
 - Annual Report
 - Leadership and organisational structure
 - Faculty handbooks
 - Act, By-Laws and Rules
 - Delegations of Authority
 - Non-confidential Agenda and Minutes of Council Meetings
 - University of New England & Regional Archives
 - Publicly available research data in e-Publications@UNE
 - Heritage Register (available on the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage website)
 - Information published on the University website (excluding the University intranet)

Information Available through Informal Release

The University will generally provide the following types of information in response to an information request, without the need to make a formal access application under the GIPA Act:

- Documents that have already been made public in some other way
- Other reasonable requests for information, which are not excessive, and the release of which would not require third party consultation or raise concerns in terms of public interest considerations against disclosure. Current staff and enrolled students may request access to their routine files without the need for formal access application, using the forms on the University's Right to Information website at www.une.edu.au/about-une/governance/gipa-foi-act.

This form of release does not require a fee. Information can may be released with deletions, released subject to reasonable conditions, or released in a preferred form. There may be charges for photocopying and for documents available for sale to the public.

Information Available through Formal Access Applications

In some circumstances, access to information will require a formal application under relevant laws. The public has a right to access information in this way unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Further information on how to make a formal access application or to contact the University's Right to Information Officers can be access through the University's Right to Information webpage at www.une.edu.au/about-une/governance/gipa-foi-act

Information regarding access to government information may also be obtained from the NSW Information and Privacy Commission at ipc.nsw.gov.au or telephone 1800 472 679.