



Charles Sturt  
University

# University Council and Committees Submission Writing Guidelines

Office of Governance and Corporate Affairs

For further information and to provide feedback please contact  
[governance@csu.edu.au](mailto:governance@csu.edu.au)

Version Number	Revision Date	Description
1	30/9/21	Original document

# Submission Writing Checklist

1. Clear purpose
2. Appropriate recommendation
3. Sufficient background
4. Comprehensive summary of current status
5. Clear next steps/implementation (including timeframes where possible)
6. Assurance of compliance
7. Assessment of risk
8. Relevant attachments

# Submission writing guidelines

Council members are required to go through a decision checklist ([Appendix 1](#)) when considering submissions put before them. All submissions should aim to address the questions in the checklist so that the Council can make a fully informed decision. Addressing these questions also helps prevent the rejection of submissions and the need for resubmission due to lack of information.

The following guidelines outline the sections of the submission template and includes stylistic guidance for completing the template as well as questions that correspond to those in the decision checklist.

## General

Every submission to Council needs to have a confidential coversheet on the approved template. The submission template is to be used for externally provided reports, proposals and other submissions. Reports from superior / subordinate committees should use the Report template.

Please submit submissions in Word as OGCA may need to make changes to item number, etc. Formatting of the templates may change over time so please ensure you are using the most updated version, available on the [OGCA website](#). Submissions are due to Governance two weeks and two days prior to the meeting.

## Header

The first line of the header is left blank, OGCA will complete the Committee name, number and date.

Hover the mouse over the downward arrow beside the words "Choose an item" and choose the relevant item from the drop-down menu provided in the template.

**DECISION:** Item requires a decision or action

**DISCUSSION:** Item does not require a decision, but may be seeking feedback

**NOTING:** Item does not require a decision or discussion, but Committee needs to see it

## Item Number/Name

The item number is left blank, OGCA will assign a number when compiling the agenda.

The item name should clearly identify the item, but needs to be short. Any description of the item or the action required should be contained in the body of the submission. The item title will appear in the agenda.

Do: *'Governance Review Update'*

Don't: *'Update on the progress of compliance with the Governance Reviews'*

## Purpose

What is the reason for the submission? Are you providing an update, seeking feedback through a discussion or requesting the Committee take a particular action? It may be better to complete the recommendation section first as the purpose acts as a summary of the entire submission.

If an item is for discussion and/or feedback, specify this in the purpose section, rather than in the recommendation section.

The purpose should be a 1 – 2 sentence description, in plain language (do not use acronyms, abbreviations, or technical language)

Do: *'To seek the University Council's approval of the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy.'*

Don't: *'The RCU is seeking the approval of the newly drafted Fraud and Corruption Control Policy which will aim to address gaps in CSU's risk framework as identified by VCLT.'*

## Recommendation

The recommendation section is where you list the action(s)/decision(s) you are asking the committee to take – what you want to have achieved at the end of the item's consideration by the committee. There are a few considerations that need to be made here.

1. What is the action/decision required?

In your recommendations, use one of the following approved verbs only: **approve, endorse, note, recommend, or request**. See [Appendix 2](#) for full descriptions of the approved verbs and where they can be used. Do not use 'discuss' as this is likely to be part of the purpose for the submission (and will happen during the meeting). Use 'note' rather than 'accept', and 'approve' instead of 'ratify'.

2. Who has the authority to make the decision?

Before making a decision, Council must assure itself that they have the authority to make that decision.

You need to make sure that the Committee to whom you are making a submission has the authority to make the decision you are requesting.

While Council has ultimate authority for all decision making at the University, it has delegated some of its authority to persons, positions, or committees. Those decisions should be made by the relevant delegated authority, not by Council. Refer to the [Delegations Register](#) and [Policy Library](#) to ensure the Committee you are requesting a decision is appropriate to make it.

For single recommendations:

*'The Council resolves to note the Governance Review Update'*

For multiple recommendation:

*'The Council resolves to:*

1. *note the Governance Review update; and*
2. *approve the Governance (Made Up) Rule 2021'*

For recommendations from a previous Committee:

*'The Council resolved to accept the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee and approve the Governance (Made Up) Rule 2021'*

## Background

Specify whether the submission has undergone consultation with stakeholders, and who those stakeholders are.

Specify whether the submission has been previously considered by VCLT or another governance committee, and what, if any, changes were subsequently made. If this is the case, the recommendation should also state 'accept the recommendation of <Committee>'.

More substantive background material, such as business cases, reports and policy documents, can be included as attachments if required.

## Current Status

The questions Council must address include whether they been provided with enough information so that each member of Council can make a fully informed decision, and whether a reasonable person would accept or reject the submission based on the information provided.

Ensure there is enough information provided so that the Council can understand what is being asked and where in the process this decision fits.

Relevant information can include: key issues, comparison of options, why a particular option is recommended, and alignment with the University's values. You will also need to identify if there are any issues regarding compliance and how they will be addressed. Council and its committees approach compliance on an exception reporting basis, assuming everything is on track unless advised otherwise. This

is where concerns or issues with compliance can be highlighted for the committee's attention. See the below section on compliance for further details.

## Next steps/Implementation

The Council will need to know what the outcome of their decision will be.

1. What will happen after the decision is made?

What are the next steps that need to occur? What are the consequences? What are the timeframes?

Will the decision result in new policies or procedures, or will changes to existing documents be required? This includes recommendations for expiry of policy texts and consequential changes as a result of the approval, and identification of any changes in delegations, to be approved by Council, before the decision can take effect. Who will be responsible for this?

2. Who will be impacted by the decision?

If people will be impacted by the decision, have they been consulted and how will they be informed after the decision is made? Has a communication or implementation plan been provided? Who is responsible for this?

3. How is implementation/impact monitored?

Who is responsible for progress monitoring and reporting, who is it reported to, what is the planned frequency of reporting?

## Other headings

The three headings populated in the template are a minimum requirement. You can also add other headings and details as required.

## Compliance

What alignment does the submission have with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(HESF\)](#), legislation, policy, guidelines, etc? Is it compliant?

The newly inserted compliance table prompts you to insert relevant HESF standards and any other applicable legislation, policy, and/or guidelines. To determine what your obligations are, the following may be useful:

- Committee annual plan
- [Committee rule/membership and terms of reference](#)
- [Delegation Register](#)
- [Policy Library](#)
- Legislative Compliance Register (to be launched in December 2021)

## Risk Assessment

The Council needs to be fully informed about any potential consequences of a decision. The [Risk Appetite Statement](#) sets the parameters within which the University must operate and guides Council and staff in decision making. The University has agreed to a certain level of risk for its varied activities, if a decision exceeds that agreed level of risk, action needs to be taken.

For every decision you need refer to the Risk Appetite Statement, identify the correct category that the submission fits within, and copy and paste the relevant Risk Appetite Description from the relevant risk category. . You need to then address the following:

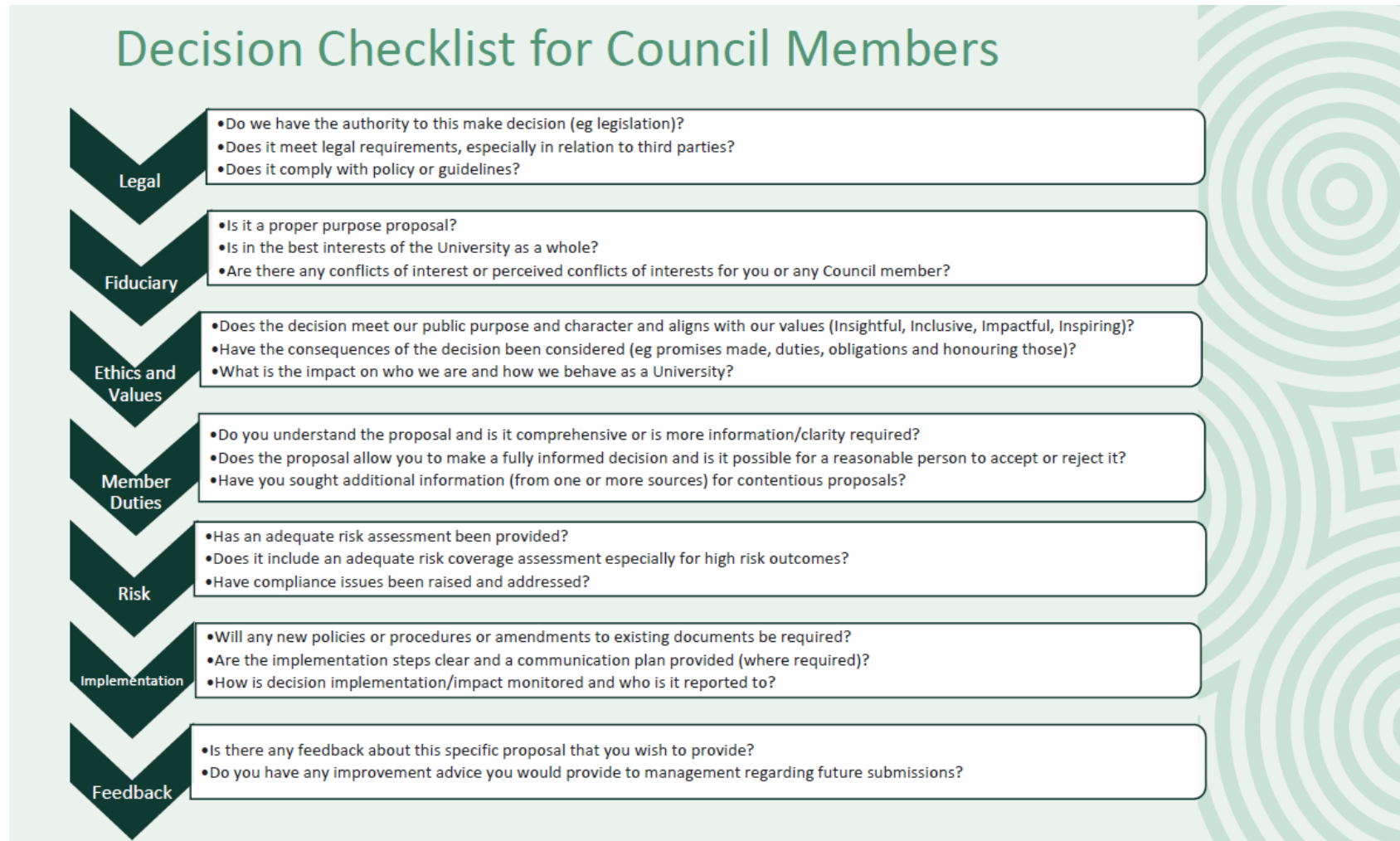
1. Will this decision sit within, approach, or exceed the Desired Risk Appetite Level?
2. If it signals a change to the current risk appetite, what are the consequences / risk treatments?

## Attachments

Submissions should be limited to two pages. If detailed information is required, consider including attachments.

Attachments should be submitted as documents separate to the submission coversheet. Please avoid adding extra pages after the main sections of the submission coversheet. There is no specific template for attachments, but Word or PDF format is requested.

# Appendix 1



# Appendix 2

Verb	Description	Use
<b>Accept</b>	<p><b>Only to be used when accepting the recommendation of a previous Committee</b></p> <p>“The Committee resolves to accept the recommendation of Academic Senate and approve..”</p>	<b>Recommendations and resolutions</b>
<b>Approve</b>	<p><b>The Committee is being asked to approve a recommendation regarding a matter for which it holds the delegation.</b></p> <p>Should only be used if the Committee holds the appropriate delegation (refer to the relevant Committee’s Terms of Reference or the Delegations Schedule, located in the Policy Library). Once approved, the item can only proceed to another committee for information (eg to note that the change has been approved); it cannot be approved again.</p>	<b>Recommendations and resolutions</b>
<b>Endorse</b>	<p><b>The Committee is being asked to support a proposal which it does not have the delegated authority to approve.</b></p> <p>Used when a recommendation needs to be referred to a higher-level body or an individual who holds a delegation to make the decision; should be referred to the higher body as “on the recommendation of [the Committee] ...”. Endorsement indicates support, not approval.</p>	<b>Recommendations and resolutions</b>
<b>Note</b>	<p><b>The Committee is being provided with information that does not necessarily require a decision or discussion, yet should form part of the formal record of the meeting.</b></p> <p>Used for receipt of reports when a decision is not required and matters which are primarily informational. ‘Noting’ can involve some discussion, but discussion and feedback are not required. If discussion is expected or feedback required, ensure you choose the ‘discussion’ indicator in the header. ‘Note’ replaces previous use of the words ‘accept’ and ‘receive’</p>	<b>Recommendations and resolutions</b>
<b>Recommend</b>	<p><b>The Committee supports the proposal but does not hold the delegation to resolve the issue / proposal and must refer it to another body.</b></p> <p>Only to be used in connection with another verb eg. “The Committee endorses and recommends to Council for approval”</p>	<b>Resolutions only</b>
<b>Request</b>	<p><b>The Committee asks that further action be undertaken by another body.</b></p> <p>Requests arise as an outcome of discussion and will generally accompany another recommendation eg. The Committee noted the report and requested that further information be provided’</p>	<b>Resolutions only</b>