

Executive Dean – First Year College

Classification: Senior Staff Contract

POSITION NUMBER	951555
POSITION REPORTS TO	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer
COLLEGE / PORTFOLIO / DEPARTMENT	First Year College
LOCATION/CAMPUS	The position is currently located at the Footscray Park Campus of Victoria University (VU). The position and incumbent may be relocated to any other existing or future University work locations where it conducts its operations.

OVERALL PURPOSE

The Executive Dean of the First Year College is a pivotal academic leader within Victoria University's (VU) Tertiary Education portfolio. This role is central to advancing VU's strategic ambition to deliver sector-leading offerings that address workforce needs and provide an exceptional student experience. The Executive Dean plays a key role in realising the University's commitment to accessibility and opportunity for a diverse student population, contributing directly to the objectives outlined in the VU **Strategic Plan 2022–2030**.

Reporting to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer (SDVC), the Executive Dean will provide high-level strategic, academic, and operational leadership. This includes oversight of quality assurance, academic integrity, talent attraction, employee engagement, student experience, business development, and financial management across the College.

The Executive Dean leads the College leadership team to ensure effective and innovative delivery of the distinctive VU Block Model® curriculum, alongside high-quality research and industry engagement. A key focus of the role is fostering interdisciplinary collaboration in education and research – across Colleges, VU TAFE, and VU Research – and supporting integrated course delivery across the University.

In alignment with VU's deep commitment to progressive inclusivity and Protecting Country, the Executive Dean will champion equity, widening participation, and student success. This includes advocating for the respect, inclusion, and advancement of First Nations perspectives and voices within the University community.

ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

VU is one of only six Australian universities to proudly offer both Higher Education and TAFE.

In 2018, VU boldly introduced an innovative pedagogic and curriculum approach: the VU Block Model. This, along with the VU First Year College, has redefined the VU student experience and been one of the most transformative innovations in the Australian higher education sector over the past decade.

People and Culture use only

VU has nation-leading participation and success rates for students from an equity background, with almost half of VU students being the first in their family to attend University.

VU is renowned for its areas of research specialisation, including Sports and Exercise Science (ranked 7th in the world) as well as Policy Studies; Water Research; Green Research Translation; Immunology and Early Childhood Education, to name a few. The University ranks 70th in the Times Higher Education Young University Rankings.

Victoria University's **Strategic Plan 2022–2030** builds on these strengths, with a clear purpose and vision to shape its future success.

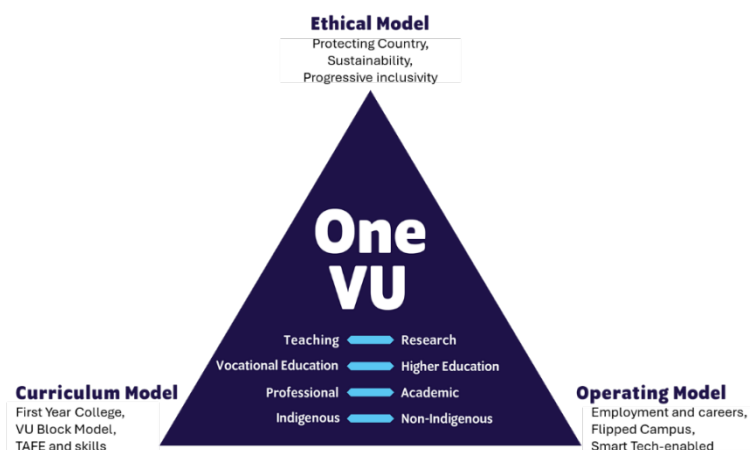
Purpose

We are of Melbourne's west and of the world – championing progressive and excellent education, impactful research, meaningful industry engagement, and a deep commitment to Protecting Country.

Vision

To be one of the leading impact-driven universities in the world by 2030.

One VU



Strategic Drivers

To achieve its vision, VU has five strategic drivers:

1. Learner-centred for Life
2. Partnering with Principle
3. Maximising Research with Impact
4. Protecting Country
5. A Thriving Place to Study and Work.

MAJOR CHALLENGES / FREEDOM TO ACT

The Executive Dean position will lead decisions on matters that affect the College, aligned to VU's Strategic and Operational Plans, with the input of key peers, stakeholders and students. This position reports to, and receives broad direction from the SDVC, is a member of the Tertiary Education Executive team (see Organisational Charts attached), and operates within University policies, procedures, guidelines, and legislative and regulatory requirements.

A key challenge of this role is to continue building student load while maintaining high levels of student satisfaction, academic quality and improving graduate outcomes. Central to this will be the continuous improvement of course and unit design and delivery.

As a key leadership function, this role supports the work of the SDVC and the broader Tertiary Education portfolio in realising its goals of building a leading dual sector institution.

The role will work with an extensive internal and external network through the College management structure, the Tertiary Education Executive team, in addition to key enabling functions and industry partners and the Victoria University Council and Executive Group.

The Executive Dean will oversee the College budget and actively participate in cross-functional team meetings within the institution to develop compelling go-to-market initiatives and programs, while strengthening positioning and reputation. The Executive Dean plays an important role in shaping organisational culture, particularly within the College. The role also works collaboratively and in partnership with University departments in the establishment of systems and processes that celebrate employee performance, builds capability and promote diversity and inclusion.

MAJOR DUTIES

Strategic Leadership

- Provide visionary leadership to position Victoria University as a university of choice for students, staff, industry, community, and government.
- Lead the strategic implementation of the University's Operational Plan within the College, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and timely execution.
- Provide thought leadership to drive industry engagement, commercial development, teaching and research excellence, and strategic priority setting.
- Work closely with the College Head of Operations to oversee financial performance and budgetary discipline.

Learning and Teaching

- Partner with the Chief Marketing Officer and Chief International Officer to shape and execute strategies for domestic and international student recruitment and engagement. Achieve University targets for student load, retention, teaching quality, satisfaction, completions and employment outcomes.
- Establish clear initiatives to foster the teaching/research nexus, collaboration with VU Research and Research Institutes and Centres of Excellence to grow VU's research scale and impact.
- Strengthen academic-industry connections to enrich curriculum relevance and student employment. Leverage industry co-location to provide authentic learning experiences and inform academic practice.
- Identify opportunities to extend the VU Block Model to position the University as a leading provider of personalised learning experiences, including co-designed offerings with our students and industry.
- Lead evidence-based planning and performance monitoring aligned with the University's Strategic Plan.

Student Experience

- Champion the VU Block Model and cultivate a culture of student-centric engagement and supported transition to university life, including oversight University student retention initiatives.
- Develop inclusive practices that support a diverse student cohort, including Indigenous, international, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

- Actively support staff development and the scholarship of learning and teaching, particularly on evidence-based innovation in Block pedagogy, leveraging the VU Block Model Academy.
- Advance strategies to enhance graduate employability and foster strong employer engagement.

People and Culture

- Lead a model for ongoing mentoring and staff development, recognition of performance through teaching excellence awards, promotion and professional development opportunities.
- Promote and foster cross-disciplinary collaborations and opportunities in teaching and research across the Colleges.
- Build a high-performing team environment through goal-setting, performance reviews, and development planning aligned with University strategy.
- Support initiatives to attract, retain, and develop Indigenous staff and students, and promote a diverse, inclusive, and safe workplace.
- Collaborate with the College Head of Operations on effective modelling and constructive engagement with staff to review academic work allocations, optimise class sizes and leave management.
- Ensure organisational structures, systems, and processes are fit-for-purpose and support College and University objectives.

Financial and Resource Management

- Develop and implement strategies to enhance College productivity and financial sustainability, focusing on course quality, market responsiveness, teaching capability, and delivery efficiency.
- Uphold financial discipline and resource stewardship to enable strategic investment and growth.
- Monitor expenditure rigorously to ensure budget compliance and resource optimisation.

Quality Assurance

- Ensure the effective and efficient management of all educational programs with a focus on quality assurance and associated review processes, including contributing effectively to the University's governance framework.
- Ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, including TEQSA, ASQA, and relevant professional accrediting bodies.

Social, Environmental and Financial Impact

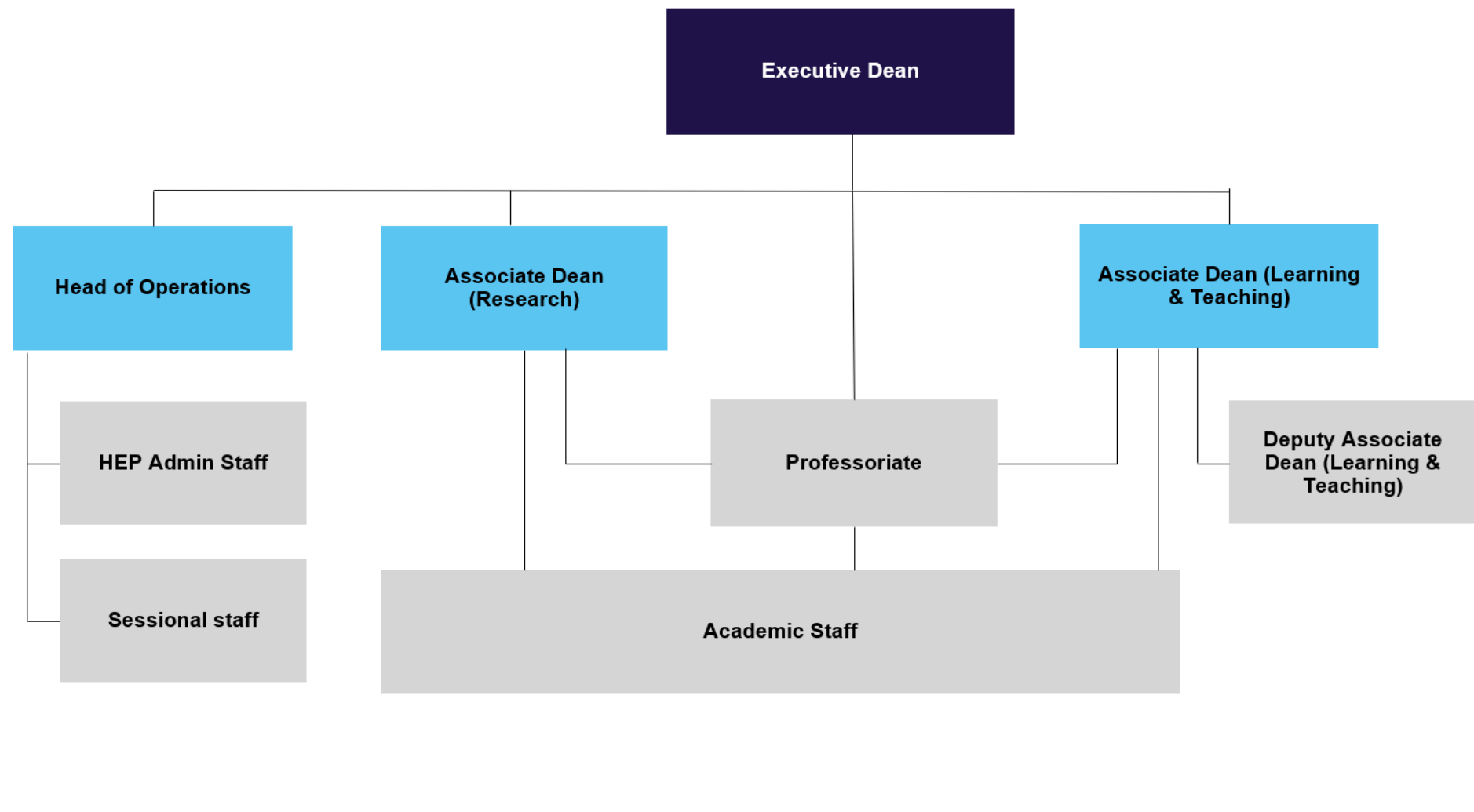
- Commit to sustainable practice and action and ensure that decisions align with our commitment to Protecting Country and the University's Net Zero plan.
- Maintain effective incident reporting and management systems, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
- Promote ethical and responsible management of public funds and resources so that the University is able to grow its resource base and to invest in its strategic priorities.
- Champion well-being and psychological safety, embedding meaningful practices across the College
- Oversee risk management processes to ensure health, safety, and environmental standards are upheld for all College stakeholders.

SELECTION CRITERIA

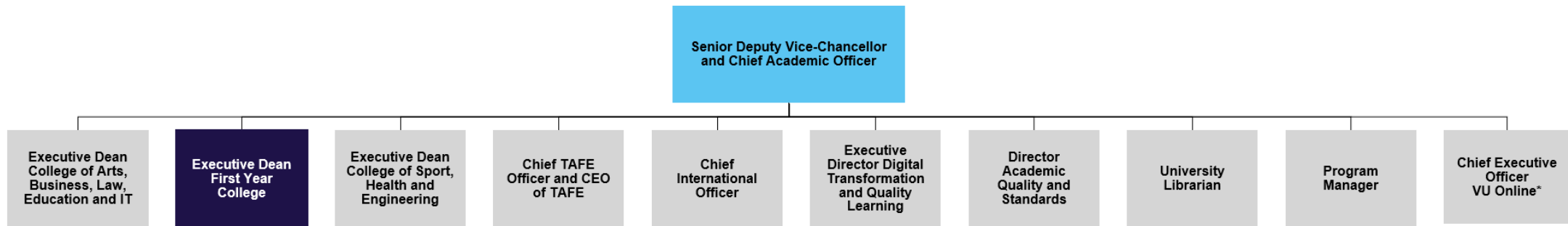
Essential

1. PhD qualifications and recognition as an international authority in tertiary education in one or more disciplines/professions/industries.
2. Significant experience as a senior executive in a Higher Education academic leadership position, and a thorough understanding of external factors, national and global, affecting the tertiary education sector's performance and funding, including government policy frameworks.
3. An understanding of the Victoria University student body, its needs and the philosophy of the VU Block Model, including the knowledge and use of innovative teaching strategies, models or resources to support learning outcomes.
4. A proven commercially astute leader who has demonstrated a capacity to develop and maintain positive working relationships with both internal and external stakeholders that are mutually beneficial and support the achievement of organisational goals.
5. A proven ability to drive a values-based culture of ethical conduct, collaboration and participation, role modelling high standards for engagement and leadership behaviour in a multi-disciplinary environment.
6. Demonstrated financial and budget management of a significant portfolio in a large and complex organisation.
7. A well-developed understanding of organisational dynamics and change management methodologies in Higher Education.
8. Proven track record in growing and developing creative and market responsive Higher Education offerings that meet future workforce needs.
9. A proven commitment to developing and sustaining quality assurance, academic integrity, and compliance with policies, procedures regulations and legislation.
10. Proven ability to implement and monitor management systems to ensure that OH&S risks arising from operations under their responsibility are managed well, combined with a sound knowledge of, and commitment to, OH&S principles with a demonstrated ability to integrate and implement these at the strategic level.
11. Demonstrates strong leadership in the support of VU Values:
 - a. Always welcoming
 - b. Always ethical
 - c. Always sharing the future
 - d. Always together.

Org chart: VU First Year College®



Org Chart: Tertiary Education Executive



■ Vacant Position

* Wholly owned subsidiary