



 VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

**SIR ZELMAN COWEN
DEAN OF LAW**

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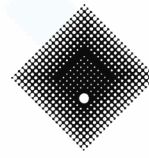
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Country is alive. Country is here and now and not some relic of the past.

We acknowledge and pay our deep respects to the Ancestors, Elders, and families of the Traditional Owners on all of our campuses. At Victoria University (VU) we honour Indigenous cultures. Everything we do and every decision we make is underpinned by a commitment to Protecting Country. Country is both a place of belonging and a way of believing, as well as contributing to the conservation of critical environmental and diverse cultural assets. It is a community-driven movement towards long-term social, cultural, physical, and economic prosperity and sustainability.





A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DEAN

I am proud to lead Victoria University's College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and Information Technology.

Our law programs have long been recognised for their commitment to widening participation, academic excellence and preparing graduates for meaningful careers across the legal profession, government, industry and the community sector. Through innovative teaching and strong connections with the profession, we equip our students with the knowledge, skills and practical experience required to address the complex legal and ethical challenges of contemporary society.

Located in Melbourne's west, Victoria University has a distinctive mission to transform lives through education and to contribute positively to the communities we serve. These values are deeply embedded in our law programs, where issues of justice, equity, human rights and community engagement are central to both our teaching and research.



Our curriculum is informed by contemporary legal practice, emerging technologies and evolving societal needs. Students benefit from authentic learning experiences, clinical and work-integrated opportunities, and engagement with leading legal practitioners, members of the judiciary, policymakers and community organisations. This ensures our graduates are well-prepared for professional practice and leadership in a rapidly changing legal landscape.

Research within the College addresses significant legal, social and policy challenges facing Australia and the global community. Our academics are recognised for research that influences public debate, informs policy development and contributes to legal reform.

Through interdisciplinary collaboration and strong external partnerships, we seek to generate impactful research that advances justice and improves social outcomes.

The Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of legal education and research at Victoria University. Named in honour of one of Australia's most distinguished legal scholars, public intellectuals and former Governors-General, the position offers a unique opportunity to build on a proud legacy while driving innovation, excellence and impact.

This is an exciting time for Victoria University as we strengthen our reputation as a university of opportunity and excellence. We are seeking an outstanding academic leader who will inspire staff and students, deepen engagement with the legal profession and community, and advance our ambition to be a leading law school recognised for educational innovation, research excellence and social impact.

I welcome your interest in joining Victoria University and contributing to the next chapter of our law school's distinguished history.

Professor Rob Strathdee
Executive Dean
College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and Information Technology
Victoria University

About Victoria University

Our Awards and Rankings



Ranked top 2% worldwide

VU is ranked in the top 2% of universities worldwide (Times Higher Education 2024).



Award-winning learning

Achieve more through our award-winning VU Block Model®. Study one subject at a time, in interactive, workshop-style classes where you can build hands-on skills.

No.1

in Australia for technical skills

2022 QILT Employer Satisfaction Survey.

No.1

in Victoria for learning engagement

2022 QILT Student Experience Survey.



No.7 in sport education

ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities, also known as the Shanghai Ranking) 2023.



101–200th impact ranking

Times Higher Ed (THE) Impact Rankings 2023.



Net zero by 2025

Our goal is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2025, and to be net positive by 2028 – leading the way for other universities across Australia.



No.66 in equity and excellence

VU ranked #66 globally for Equality in the QS World University Sustainability Rankings 2024, recognising VU's deep commitment to progressive inclusivity in all we do.



101–150th young university in the world

(Young University Rankings 2023). While VU has offered education and training in Melbourne's west for over 100 years, we have been a university for less than 50.



Winner Vocational education and training

Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence: VU Together Against Racism Working Group (2023).



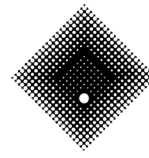
Platinum winner Best ethical training & best diversity/inclusion

LearnX: *VU Understanding & Celebrating LGBTQIA+ Identities* and *Together Against Racism* eLearning modules (2023).



Platinum winner Best online learning & best eLearning team

LearnX: VU Online (2023).



OUR 2022-2030 STRATEGY: START WELL, FINISH BRILLIANTLY

Purpose	Vision	Values
Our why We are of Melbourne's west and of the world – championing progressive and excellent education, research, service and a deep commitment to Protecting Country.	Our what To be one of the leading impact-driven universities in the world by 2030.	Always welcoming Ethical Shaping the future Together

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

To achieve our vision, we have identified five Strategic Drivers to get us to our 2028 target. Our vision is big and ambitious. It is also achievable.



Three elements are particularly distinctive for VU:

- Matching learning to lives with concurrent Higher Education and VU Polytechnic offerings in areas of clear workforce need.
- A 'flipped campus' approach bringing ethical industries onto and into the core of each campus to enhance employability.
- The integrative underpinning of Protecting Country and planetary health throughout research and the operations of the university.

To read the full Strategic Plan [CLICK HERE](#)

Our campuses

We have eight campuses across Melbourne's west, CBD, and interstate.

City Tower



Footscray Nicholson



Footscray Park



St Albans



Sunshine



Werribee



Brisbane



Sydney



Our teaching and learning structure

Victoria University's teaching and learning structure is structured around our distinctive specialisations and areas of expertise.

- ◆ Two discipline-based higher education colleges
 - College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and IT
 - College of Sport, Health and Engineering
- ◆ The First Year College®
- ◆ A TAFE division known as VU TAFE.
 - College of Trades, Technology and Hospitality
 - College of Health, Early Childhood and Community Services
 - Centre of VU Transitions

Our dual sector status is something we are proud of and want to do more with. This means offering dual sector education in a new, concurrent way, bringing together the most relevant skills with the best possible career-focused degrees.

VU students can choose to graduate when they meet their initial study goals, enhance their job prospects by earning extra qualifications concurrently, and come back for more study whenever they wish.

VU First Year College® and the VU Block Model®

VU is the only university in Australia with a college dedicated to the first year of study. The First Year College was first introduced in 2018 and is led by a multidisciplinary team of specialist educators.

Soon after came the revolutionary (and award-winning) VU Block Model®, a unique learning and teaching approach enabling our students to realise their potential.

While other universities typically teach in semesters with multiple subjects at a time, at VU students balance their study, lives, and work by doing just one subject at a time – intensively and in small student groups – over a four-week period.

TAFE at Victoria University

Through TAFE at Victoria University, we offer contemporary vocational education and applied industry-relevant programs that build skills and competencies for lasting success in work and life.

Courses are hands-on and immersive, with a range of opportunities provided through our strong network of partners. With our state-of-the-art facilities and workplace connections, students develop the job-ready skills they need to succeed.



COLLEGE OF ARTS, BUSINESS, LAW, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

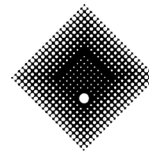
CoABLE&IT brings together expertise across technology, business, law, education, the creative industries, and the social sciences to address the opportunities and challenges shaping contemporary society.

Through interdisciplinary teaching, research, and engagement, we equip students with the knowledge and practical skills to drive innovation, promote social impact, and lead positive change.

Our courses are developed in partnership with industry and informed by contemporary research, ensuring graduates are prepared for successful careers in an increasingly digital, connected, and complex world.

From artificial intelligence and cybersecurity to business, education, law, and the creative industries, our students develop the confidence and capability to make a meaningful contribution to their professions and communities.





THE OPPORTUNITY

Position Title	Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law
College/Department	College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and IT
Location/Campus	The position will have a primary campus location at Victoria University's City campus in the heart of the CBD law precinct. The position and incumbent may be relocated to any other existing or future work locations where the University conducts its operations.
Portfolio	Tertiary Education Portfolio

OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law of Victoria University (VU) is a pivotal academic and professional leader within the College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and IT, providing strategic, academic and operational leadership to advance the University's impact driven mission and to steward the enduring legacy of Sir Zelman Cowen.

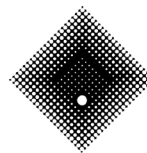
Named in honour of one of Australia's most distinguished jurists, scholars and public intellectuals, the role embodies Sir Zelman Cowen's lifelong commitment to the rule of law, public service, intellectual rigour, civic responsibility, social justice and inclusive education. Through leadership of the VU Law School and the Sir Zelman Cowen initiatives, the Dean ensures that these values are actively expressed through curriculum, research, public engagement and professional formation.

The role is central to delivering sector leading law and justice education, research and engagement that responds to contemporary workforce, civic and societal needs, while providing an outstanding, inclusive and student centred experience. Aligned with the VU Strategic Plan 2022-2030, the Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law leads the Law School's contribution to equity led excellence, graduate employability, research with impact and principled partnerships, positioning law and justice as a critical public good.

Reporting to the Executive Dean of the College, the Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law is accountable for the strategic and operational performance of the VU Law School across learning and teaching, research and knowledge exchange, industry and government engagement, quality assurance, financial sustainability and people leadership. The role works in close partnership with University service units, research entities, professional bodies and external stakeholders to deliver integrated, future focused outcomes.

The Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law will champion the distinctive strengths and public facing contributions of the Law School, including:

- Its location in the Melbourne City legal precinct, enabling deep engagement with courts, the profession, government and industry.
- The VU Block Model®, delivering personalised, intensive and applied legal education.
- Nationally recognised initiatives such as the award winning Parliamentary Program, industry embedded learning, and strong clinical and experiential offerings.
- The Sir Zelman Cowen Lecture and the Hon. Michael Kirby Justice Oration, flagship events that position VU as a national forum for principled legal debate, democratic values and progressive legal thought.
- A renowned moot and advocacy program, including the annual Michael Kirby Contract Law Moot Competition, reinforcing excellence in legal reasoning, advocacy and professional identity.
- A strong commitment to accessible and connected pathways across diplomas, undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and higher degree research programs.



Reflecting VU's deep commitment to progressive inclusivity and Protecting Country, the Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law will lead with integrity and purpose to advance equity, participation and success for a diverse student and staff community. This includes embedding First Nations knowledges and perspectives across curriculum, research and engagement, supporting self-determination, and fostering a culturally safe and respectful environment.

Through visionary leadership, principled partnership and disciplined execution, the Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law will strengthen the reputation, relevance and public impact of the VU Law School – locally, nationally and globally – ensuring it continues to honour Sir Zelman Cowen's legacy while contributing meaningfully to Victoria University's ambition to be one of the world's leading impact-driven universities

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

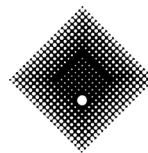
The Sir Zelman Cowen Dean of Law operates with a high degree of autonomy and accountability for the strategic and operational performance of the VU Law School, within University policy, governance and delegated authority, and under the direction of the Executive Dean. Key challenges and accountabilities include:

- Providing integrated leadership across learning and teaching, research, and industry and community engagement, ensuring these activities are contemporary, mutually reinforcing and aligned to workforce, civic and societal needs.
- Driving collaboration and interdisciplinary engagement across law, justice and cognate disciplines within the College, across other Colleges, VU TAFE, VU Research and enabling units, modelling a One VU approach.
- Contributing actively to College and University leadership, including participation in University wide strategic planning, decision making and implementation of Strategic and Operational Plans.
- Leading a clear and compelling strategic mission for the Law School that advances equity, inclusion and participation, strengthens student success and graduate outcomes, and enhances the University's impact driven reputation.
- Ensuring sound financial stewardship and sustainability, including effective planning, resource allocation and performance management, balancing academic quality, student experience and long term viability.
- Advocating for law and justice within the University and externally, strengthening the profile, influence and contribution of the Law School at institutional, community, state and national levels.
- Engaging with the legal profession and peak bodies, representing the University in public and professional forums, and ensuring programs, partnerships and research remain current, credible and professionally relevant.
- Developing and sustaining a strategic international engagement agenda, embedding internationalisation across teaching, research and partnerships in line with the University's global aspirations.
- Fostering a high performing, inclusive culture in which staff and students are supported, engaged and safe, and where excellence in teaching, research and engagement is enabled and recognised.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITIES

In performing the duties of this role, the incumbent is required to comply with all relevant University policies and procedures, quality assurance frameworks, and legislative and regulatory requirements. Key responsibilities include:

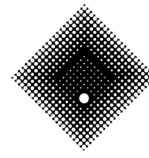
- Providing strategic and operational leadership of the VU Law School, aligning planning, resourcing and performance with the University's Strategic and Operational Plans.
- Ensuring effective stewardship of financial, human, intellectual and physical resources, including oversight of the Academic Workload Model, and exercising program level operational leadership typically associated with a Head of Program, including curriculum delivery, staffing and workload coordination, and quality assurance.
- Serving as Chair of the Sir Zelman Cowen initiative, providing leadership for the stewardship of its legacy and intellectual focus, and leading the planning, governance and delivery of the annual Sir Zelman Cowen Lecture as a flagship public event for the Law School and the University.
- Positioning the Law School as a nationally and internationally recognised contributor to legal education, research and civic impact, including through revenue diversification and strategic partnership opportunities.
- Being accountable for compliance with all internal and external quality assurance, accreditation, regulatory and professional requirements.



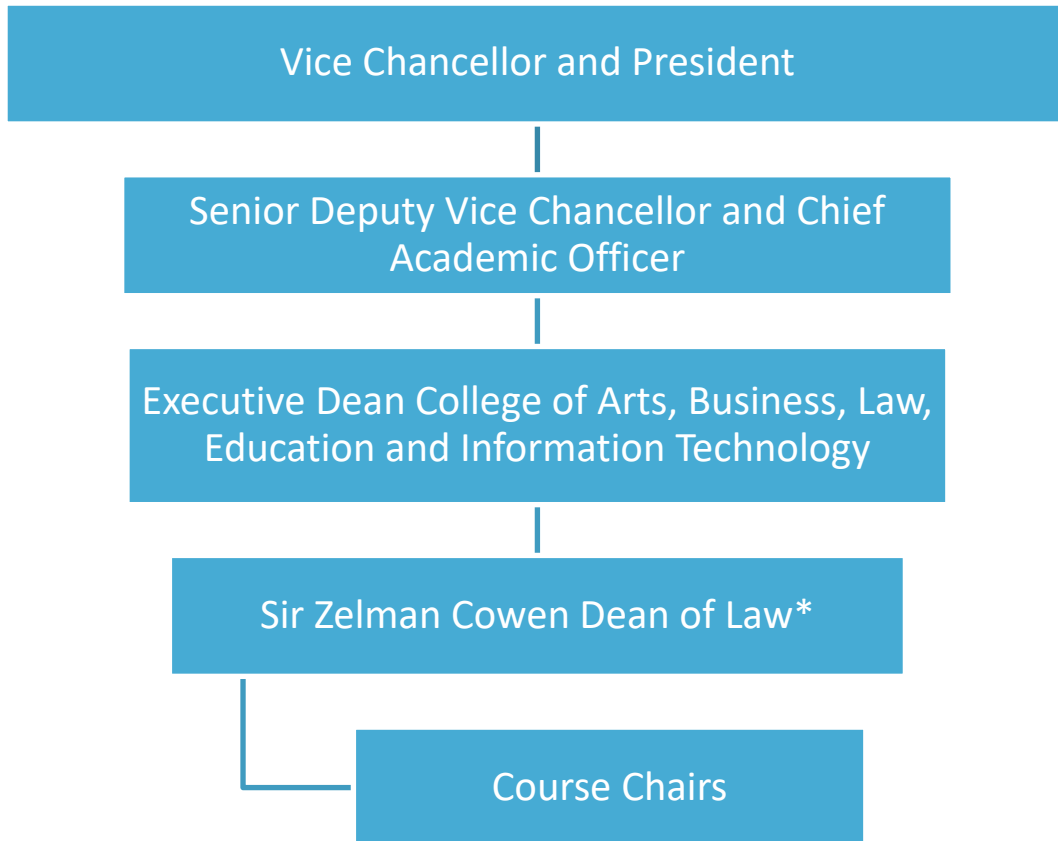
- Recruiting, leading and developing high quality academic and professional staff, fostering a high performing, inclusive and collegial culture aligned with University values.
- Leading the design, delivery and continuous improvement of a contemporary, accessible and market responsive Law curriculum across on campus, blended and online modes.
- Strengthening applied, industry embedded and work integrated learning to enhance student pathways, employability and graduate outcomes.
- Leading evidence based strategies to improve student retention, progression, success and completion, with a particular focus on students from diverse and equity backgrounds.
- Cultivating a strong research culture that supports high quality, ethical and impactful research and research training aligned with University priorities.
- Building and sustaining strong engagement with industry, the legal profession, government and community to support knowledge exchange, enterprise and reputation.
- Developing and maintaining a national and international profile, including offshore education and research initiatives aligned with the University's International Strategy.
- Building effective cross University relationships, representing the Law School internally, and championing a One VU approach, diversity, inclusion, wellbeing and occupational health and safety.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Doctoral qualification and a law qualification (LLB or JD or equivalent).
- Substantial senior academic leadership experience in a complex higher education environment, with demonstrated responsibility for learning and teaching, research, industry engagement and operational performance across the boarder discipline areas in this field.
- Demonstrated understanding of the contemporary tertiary education landscape, including national and international policy, regulatory and funding contexts across higher education and vocational education, and the professional environments in which law and justice graduates operate.
- A clear strategic vision for the future of law and justice education and demonstrated commitment to honouring Sir Zelman Cowen's legacy, grounded in workforce relevance, civic impact, graduate employability and societal contribution.
- Proven capability to lead research and research training, including building research culture and capability, supporting applied and translational research, and contributing to outcomes with local, national and international impact.
- Demonstrated financial and resource management expertise, including experience managing budgets, staffing and resources within a complex organisation, and a track record of delivering sustainable outcomes aligned to strategic priorities.
- Strong strategic planning and execution capability, with evidence of translating strategy into operational outcomes that strengthen academic quality, market position and organisational sustainability.
- Highly developed people leadership capability, with demonstrated success in leading diverse academic and professional teams through change, fostering engagement, inclusion, performance and wellbeing, and communicating with clarity, credibility and purpose.
- Well-developed commercial and business acumen, including the ability to identify emerging trends, assess risk, develop new opportunities, and build viable partnerships that support growth, impact and financial resilience.
- A strong national and/or international profile as a leader in law and justice education and scholarship, with evidence of high-quality publications, research income generation, professional standing and external engagement.
- Demonstrated alignment with VU's values and leadership capabilities, including the ability to:
 - Deliver service excellence through accountability, results orientation and sound judgement
 - Engage effectively with students, staff, industry and community partners
 - Collaborate and partner across disciplines, portfolios and external organisations
 - Innovate through continuous improvement, digital enablement and entrepreneurial thinking
 - Lead with integrity by setting direction, enabling change, and developing people.
 - Sound knowledge of occupational health and safety obligations, with demonstrated ability to integrate health, safety and wellbeing considerations into strategic and operational decision making.



ORGANISATIONAL CHART





NEXT STEPS

Initial contact should be made with Professor Rob Strathee
Executive Dean
College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and Information Technology
Victoria University

Rob Strathee
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