

<b>Designation as Academic Policy</b>			
<b>Policy Sponsor</b>	Chief Human Resource Officer	<b>Category</b>	Board
<b>Policy Contact</b>	Chief Human Resource Officer	<b>Effective Date</b>	
<b>Approved By</b>	Board of Governors	<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>Approved Date</b>			

### 1. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure clarity and consistency with respect to how the university will designate, except from designation, or change the designation of individual employees or categories of employees as “academic staff” in AU’s digital learning environment.

### 2. Scope

The *Post-secondary Learning Act* (“**PSLA**”) outlines the rights, powers and privileges of the Board of Governors of Athabasca University (the “**Board**”). Specifically, Section 60(2) grants the Board the discretionary authority to designate or make changes to the designation of employees and/or groups of employees as “academic staff”.

### 3. Definitions

<b>Board</b>	The Governors of Athabasca University and any delegate thereof
<b>Chief Human Resource Officer</b>	The person or persons occupying the position of Chief Human Resource Officer and any designate of the Chief Human Resource Officer
<b>Executive</b>	A member of the University Executive including the President, Provosts, Vice-Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, the University Secretary, Chief of Staff to the President and the Chief Human Resource Officer, and any other positions as so designated.

<b>PSLA</b>	The Post-secondary Learning Act
<b>PSERA</b>	The Public Service Employee Relations Act
<b>University or AU</b>	Athabasca University

#### 4. Guiding Principles

An AU Academic is generally a terminally credentialed expert and specialist who is responsible for the delivery, quality assurance, maintenance and development of Ministry-approved credited programs and courses of study in their primary area of specialty or relevant discipline, and who prioritizes and maintains an active professional research/creation practice and who by way of service positively enriches the vitality of the University and the social and economic fabric of the communities of which it serves. More specifically, an AU Academic supports the agile and scalable digital learning environment of the University by way of academic participation in research and scholarship, service, and teaching and learning.

To inform and assist the transparent and consistent application of the Board's authority to designate, except from designation, or change the designation of individual employees or categories of employees the following objective criteria will be used to define an "academic" at the University:

Research and Scholarship is a vital function of the University; an AU Academic will:

- Independently conduct or direct original research that advances the knowledge of their specific and relevant discipline;
- Conduct funded research that leads to peer-reviewed publications and other scholarly publications; and
- Conduct research that leads to enhanced instruction through the scholarship of teaching and learning or conduct or direct research with business, industry or other organizations to create technological or social innovations.

Service through participation in the life of the University and the community of which it is a part; an AU Academic will:

- Contribute to the academic governance of the institution (i.e., reviewing and recommending academic policies and programs development) that contribute to the vitality of the University mission and the expansion of knowledge; and

- Contribute to the professional academic environment through the modelling of the highest ethical standards and service, such as providing applied research peer review, participation in academic peer advisory hiring committees.

Teaching and Learning extend beyond merely providing academic support to learners; an AU Academic will:

- Develop credit curriculum and programming, including the development of learning outcomes;
- Combine scholarship and research in the individuals specific and relevant discipline and incorporate the latest research, knowledge and theory in instruction and delivery;
- Retain overall accountability for the quality and integrity of curriculum development, delivery and assessment towards the goals of the University, the program and the course;
- Maintain responsibility for the evaluation of student performance. While an academic may delegate student evaluation the ultimate accountability for controlling the quality and standard of all course-related marking/assessment rests with the academic;
- Write, or assist with the preparation of, proposals for new or revised courses in approved programs; and
- Teaching, assessing and supervising graduate students.

Together these three pursuits – Research and Scholarship, Service, and Teaching and Learning comprise the role of an Academic at AU. The definitions of the above three pursuits are not exhaustive and are meant to illustrate the nature of these pursuits.

The Board may take other factors into account when making a decision with respect to designation. If the Board considers any additional factors, it shall provide all the parties to the decision with notice of those factors prior to making a decision, and will consult with the parties regarding the application of those factors to the designation decision, in accordance with the PSLA.

## 5. Exemptions

In accordance with the Alberta *Labour Relations Code*, employees whose roles comprise *managerial responsibilities* must be able to do so without real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. To that end and notwithstanding the criteria above (4.0), the following managerial positions are not considered to be academic staff:

- President
- Provosts
- Vice Presidents (includes Associate)
- University Secretary
- Chief Officers (including Deputy Officers)
- Directors (includes the University Librarian and Registrar)
- Deans
- Associate Deans
- Managers

In addition, staff participating in the development of, or having regular access to information supporting the University management in its negotiation of collective agreements and the application and administration of the agreements are also at risk for a real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. To that end and notwithstanding the criteria in 4.0 above, the following confidential positions are not considered to be academic staff:

- Executive Assistants or Administrative Assistants to Members of the Executive and Directors
- Office of the University Secretary Staff
- Financial Managers/Business Analysts (Budget, Planning, Reporting, Investments, Bank Signing Authorities, Fundraising)
- Integrated Planning & Assessment Staff
- Human Resources Staff

Employees who are expressly excluded from any bargaining unit under *PSEERA* shall also not be designated as “academic staff,” notwithstanding the criteria in 4.0 above.

Within the powers granted under the *PSLA* and in accordance with the intent of this policy, the Board reserves the right to modify these lists as the University's organization evolves.

## 6. Procedure

Although the Board has the authority to designate or except from designation or change the designation of individuals or groups of individuals as academic staff, the Board recognizes its obligation to consult with all affected bargaining agents. To this end, and

to ensure a thoughtful, thorough and timely consultation process, the Designation as Academic Procedure (DAP) will outline the consultation process.

## 7. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Post-Secondary Learning Act](#)

[Public Service Employee Relations Act](#)

[Labour Relations Code](#)

[Bill 7 An Act to Enhance Post-Secondary Bargaining](#)

## 8. Related Procedures/Documents

Designation as Academic Procedure

AUPE/The Governors of Athabasca University (The Board) Collective Agreement

CUPE/The Governors of Athabasca University (The Board) Collective Agreement

AUFA/The Governors of Athabasca University (The Board) Collective Agreement

AUGSA/The Governors of Athabasca University (The Board) Collective Agreement

## History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>
	Union(s) (AUFA, CUPE, AUPE) Consultation