

**MEHREEN
FARUQI**

**GREENS DEPUTY LEADER
& SENATOR FOR NSW**



29 August 2025

The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education
Parliament House, Capital Hill
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Clare,

Jason

RE: University of Technology Sydney Course Suspensions

I am writing to you in light of University of Technology Sydney's (UTS) announcement to suspend the 2026 intake for students in over 100 courses. It has been brought to my attention that this decision was made in breach of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*.

As you are aware, slashing jobs, cutting courses, insecure work and systemic wage theft have become the new norm for universities across the board. Failures of governance by universities and the dire consequences for staff and students have been in the spotlight for some time and must be reined in.

For your information, Please find the attached letter from the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) UTS Branch that outlines UTS' actions and the corresponding Threshold Standards that may be breached.

You rightly referred concerns about the Australian National University to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), and I request that you refer concerns raised about UTS to TEQSA for review as a matter of urgency.

Warm regards,

Mehreen Faruqi

Dr Mehreen Faruqi

GREENS DEPUTY LEADER & SENATOR FOR NSW



To: Senator Mehreen Faruqi

August 22nd, 2025

Dear Senator Faruqi,

Many thanks for your continued support and advocacy for Higher Education. Like you, we are passionate defenders of public education and care deeply about the sector. This is why we have been so disappointed by the actions of the UTS leadership in announcing the suspension of 2026 intake for students in over 100 courses across the university.

We believe that the suspension of intake into courses can be read as an indicator that the University wants to disestablish these courses. If this is the case, it would mean the loss of courses and whole programs in areas such as Education, International Studies and Public Health. We think it is more crucial than ever to train future teachers, public health professionals, and to provide opportunities for students to learn languages and to engage in cross-cultural studies.

Our disappointment and anger is also due to what we see as a failure of the University to adhere to relevant policies and procedures, and these are highlighted below.

This document sets out how recent actions by UTS in suspending student intakes into multiple courses, without following its own Course Approval Policy and associated governance procedures, constitute breaches of the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (“HESF”), and are thus reportable to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

The core concern is that UTS has acted outside of its internal academic governance framework, and in doing so, has simultaneously contravened multiple obligations under Section 6 of the HESF relating to governance and accountability.

6.1 Corporate Governance

Section 6.1(3)(c) of the HESF requires the governing body to confirm that higher education provision is governed by institutional policies and that operations are consistent with those policies.



UTS leadership has not followed sections 4.4-4.6 of its [Course Approval Policy](#). These sections mandate that a major change, which includes suspensions of intake, must:

1. Be authorised by the Provost via the Courses Planning Committee – the proposed suspensions have not been through the Courses Planning Committee.
2. Be processed through the Curriculum Management System – this has not happened, either.

Despite the above breaches of internal policy and procedure, UTS leadership has announced the suspension of intake of over 100 courses of study. UTS leadership has acted inconsistently with its own institutional policies, which breaches Section 6.1(3)(c) of the HESF.

This failure also gives rise to a derivative breach of Section 6.1(3)(b) of the HESF, as the governing body has failed to ensure appropriate delegations of authority are respected and monitored.

Section 6.1(4) of the HESF requires the governing body to foster an institutional environment in which students have opportunities to participate in deliberative and decision-making processes. Section 2.2(iv) of the [Standing Orders for Faculty Boards](#) says that Faculty Boards consider major changes. This step has been bypassed and vehemently denied by management that it should take place. By bypassing Faculty Boards, the student representatives on the relevant Faculty Boards have been deprived of an opportunity to participate in decision-making processes.

6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability

Section 6.2(1)(f) requires that mechanisms for competent academic governance are implemented according to the institutional academic governance policy framework.

The Course Approval Policy provides the relevant academic governance framework for changes to courses, including suspensions of intake. Failure to apply this framework constitutes a breach of this standard.

Section 6.2(1)(i) requires that credible business continuity plans and safeguards are in place to protect students affected by unexpected changes to a course of study. No such safeguards have been shown to have been implemented when intakes were suspended. Students were disadvantaged without adequate alternatives or continuity measures. There is no evidence that the required business cases and the associated planning for these changes (required under s 4.26 of the [Course Approval and Publication Procedure](#)) has been done.

Section 6.2(1)(k) requires that lapses in compliance with the HESF are identified and corrected promptly. Despite repeated concerns raised internally in conciliation workshops, UTS has not acknowledged or taken corrective action in respect of its failure to follow institutional governance processes. In fact, they vigorously assert that they remain compliant with the HESF.



6.3 Academic Governance

Section 6.3(1)(d) of the HESF requires governance structures to provide competent academic advice to the corporate governing body. By excluding Schools, Faculty Courses Committees, and Faculty Boards, UTS denied itself access to essential academic advice, thereby breaching this requirement.

Sections 6.3(2)(a)–(b) of the HESF requires that academic policies are developed, monitored, and applied effectively, and that delegations of academic authority are implemented. UTS's failure to apply the Course Approval Policy demonstrates a breakdown in the implementation and monitoring of its own academic delegations.

Section 6.3(3) of the HESF requires that students have opportunities to participate in academic governance. As noted above, by excluding Faculty Boards, UTS has directly denied students this participation, in breach of the standard.

Cumulative Effect of Breaches

The conduct described above, which is the suspension of intakes without adherence to institutional governance processes, gives rise to multiple overlapping breaches of the HESF. Specifically:

- Failure to follow institutional policy → breaches s 6.1(3)(c), s 6.2(1)(f), s 6.3(2).
- Failure to respect governance delegations → breaches s 6.1(3)(b), s 6.3(2)(b).
- Failure to involve students in governance → breaches s 6.1(4), s 6.3(3).
- Failure to ensure continuity and safeguards for students → breaches s 6.2(1)(i).
- Failure to correct lapses in compliance → breach of s 6.2(1)(k).

The seriousness of these breaches is heightened by the fact that a single course of conduct, ignoring the Course Approval Policy and related governance processes, simultaneously undermines core standards across corporate governance, monitoring and accountability, and academic governance.

What TEQSA Can Do

Under the [*Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*](#) (TEQSA Act), TEQSA has a suite of regulatory powers it may exercise where a higher education provider has breached, or is at risk of breaching, the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021. In the present matter, these include:

- Investigations for Compliance (s 59, s 116, TEQSA Act)



- TEQSA may review or examine any aspect of UTS's operations to assess whether a registered higher education provider continues to meet the Threshold Standards.
- Sanctions (s 98, TEQSA Act)
 - TEQSA may impose sanctions on a non-compliant provider for failing to meet the HESF.
- Injunctions (s 127, TEQSA Act)
 - TEQSA may apply to a court for an injunction restraining UTS from engaging in conduct that breaches the HESF, or compelling it to take action to secure compliance.
 - This would be particularly appropriate to restrain UTS from implementing further unlawful suspensions of intakes.

Conclusion

The actions of UTS represent a systemic failure to comply with its obligations under the HESF. They demonstrate disregard for internal policy frameworks, denial of academic and student participation in governance, and failure to provide continuity safeguards for students. It is becoming increasingly clear that unilateral decisions have been made with no consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

In light of these matters, it is submitted that TEQSA should investigate and consider exercising its regulatory powers under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011, including the issuing of binding directions or injunctions, to ensure UTS's compliance with the HESF.

With kind regards,

Dr. Sarah Attfield

UTS NTEU Branch President