Glossary Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to establish the use of a single authoritative glossary of key terminology (terms), acronyms, and abbreviations across Macquarie University and its controlled entities.

(2) This Policy establishes the requirements for governing glossary terms at Macquarie University (the University) to support effective enterprise data governance, in alignment with the principles and responsibilities defined in the Data Governance Policy.

(3) This Policy sets out the principles, standards, and governance structures that underpin the management of the University Glossary.

Background

(4) The general understanding and use of terminology affects our ability to effectively define and communicate information. As such, clearly defined terminology supports good governance, coherent policies, principles, rules and procedures, and accountability and decision making. Clearly defined terminology is also an effective way to describe the scope of information that needs to be recorded in University systems or documents.

(5) Uncontrolled terminology leads to misunderstandings, inefficiencies, and potential compliance breaches, and as such, can lead to increased operational, legal, and financial, risk to the University. Controlled terminology is a fundamental requirement for data quality management.

(6) Governance of University terms is core to the overall governance of our information.

(7) The quality of our information underpins the University's ability to meet its strategic objectives.

Scope

(8) This Policy applies to:

a. all University staff including:
    i. consultants and independent contractors (and their employees) engaged by the University and its controlled entities;
    ii. employees of corporations engaged by the University under a contract to provide services to the University; and
    iii. volunteers of the University;
b. all University students;
c. all University campuses and locations and controlled entities; and
d. all University physical and online operations and processes.

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Section 2 - Policy

Part A - Principles

(9) University terms and definitions are information assets and must be governed accordingly.

(10) A term must be defined if any of the following apply:

a. it is used in a report or other published communication, such as (but not limited to): rules, policies, procedures, codes, regulations, strategy documents;
b. it may be easily confused;
c. it means something different between functional areas;
d. it is used in legislation or government regulations; or
e. it is used differently or more precisely than would be expected in standard English.

(11) A term will have one definition:

a. If a different definition is required for an existing term in a different context, or for a different purpose (e.g. within a different business function), it will require a different term with its own name and definition.
b. Where a term is already defined within a rule, policy, procedure, guideline that term will apply for the purposes of that document. However, the University Glossary term must be considered for usage within the document upon review.

(12) A definition will be written in accordance with the Appendix 1 Definitions Standards.

(13) All terms must be established in accordance with Glossary Term Life Cycle Model in order to be included in the University Glossary.

(14) Terms will be reviewed annually or as required.

(15) A term that is no longer fit for purpose will be archived rather than deleted from the University Glossary. The reason it is no longer fit for purpose will be recorded in the University Glossary (e.g. "replaced by another term").

Management of Macquarie University Glossary

(16) The Macquarie University Glossary will be managed by Business Intelligence and Reporting as the official repository and source of truth. Approved terms will be published within Policy Central by Governance Services. All enquiries should be directed to Business Intelligence and Reporting at datagovernance@mq.edu.au.

Location of Macquarie University Glossary

(17) The Macquarie University Glossary will be publicly available within Policy Central. The University will only permit one location for the Glossary i.e. no other Glossary will be published on any other University webpage or system. Subsets of the Glossary may be made available through other University systems as necessary.

Part B - Governance Structure

(18) All terms in the Macquarie University Glossary will be governed as follows:

a. A term will be appointed to one Domain Data Governance Group which is responsible for a designated number of glossary libraries within their domain;

b. A term will be allocated to a library within the appointed Domain Data Governance Group:
    i. Glossary libraries are assigned a Data Steward, also known as a Glossary Librarian;
    ii. Glossary libraries are aligned to functional areas within the University;
    iii. Assigning terms to a functional area grouping allows for the management of those terms and definitions within the business function that creates and/or primarily uses that term; and
    iv. Although a term may be used by multiple functions/functional areas, it will be managed under one library, and therefore under one Data Steward, ensuring a single point of accountability for aligning and approving the definition across all business functions and ensuring the ongoing life cycle management of that term.
c. A term will have a Data Steward, also known as a Glossary Librarian, as nominated by the respective Data Governance Group, who will be the approval authority for all terms within a library; and
d. A term will have a Data Custodian who will be responsible for defining the term in consultation with the appropriate Data Steward and other stakeholders.

Part C - Roles and Responsibilities

Enterprise Data Governance Executive Sponsor

(19) The Vice-Chancellor will nominate a member of the Executive Group as the Enterprise Data Governance Executive Sponsor to be accountable for ensuring the implementation and compliance of the Data Governance Policy, including the Glossary Policy.

(20) The Enterprise Data Governance Executive Sponsor is accountable for the overall governance of the Macquarie University Glossary and the alignment of terms and language used across the University.

(21) The Data Governance Executive Sponsor will establish domain-specific Data Governance Groups, aligned to existing management structures of the University, that will drive the implementation of the Enterprise Data Governance policies and procedures to ensure compliance across the University and its controlled entities from a business perspective.

Domain Data Governance Group

(22) The Data Governance Groups will operate within the existing management structures of the University and will recommend terms for use within the Macquarie University Glossary based on the oversight and strategic direction under the authority of nominated management committees.

(23) Each Domain Data Governance Group will support the Data Governance Executive Sponsor with compliance reporting for the glossary libraries within their domain as required.

(24) Each Domain Data Governance Group is responsible for a designated number of glossary libraries and may establish, merge, or disestablish glossary libraries as needed.

(25) Each Domain Data Governance Group will nominate one Data Steward for every glossary library within its domain to approve terms based on subject matter expertise.

(26) A Domain Data Governance Group may establish a working group as needed, on the recommendation of the Data Custodian and endorsed by the relevant Data Stewards. A working group is a dynamic team that will develop the definition for a specific term, or a set of terms, for potential inclusion in the University Glossary.

(27) If there is a dispute regarding the assignment of a term to a library, it will be resolved by the Domain Data Governance Group to which the term is assigned to. If term ownership cannot be resolved, it will be escalated to the Data Governance Executive Sponsor.

Data Steward

(28) Data Stewards are nominated by the respective Domain Data Governance Group as the business subject matter experts responsible for a designated library of glossary terms.

(29) Data Stewards will be the approval authority for all terms within a library.

(30) Data Stewards must:

a. develop a definition in consultation with the Data Custodian;
b. review and approve the definitions of terms within their nominated Glossary library;
c. identify additional stakeholders of the term in consultation with the Data Custodian;
d. collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop a definition as needed;
e. resolve issues in consultation with the Data Custodian as needed;
f. escalate issues to the relevant Domain Data Governance Group as needed;
g. retire a term that is no longer fit for purpose; and
h. communicate retired terms to the University Community.

Data Custodian

(31) The Data Custodian, as supported by the relevant Data Stewards, will report to the relevant Domain Data Governance Group regarding terms recommended for use within the Macquarie University Glossary.

(32) The Data Custodian must:

a. validate a proposed term for inclusion in the University Glossary;
b. verify the use of a term and its definition in existing Macquarie University policies and against industry and/or regulatory definitions;
c. collaborate with the proposer of the term, the Data Steward, and any relevant stakeholders to develop the definition as needed;
d. develop the definition of a term by applying the Definition Standard and quality check the drafted definition against the Definition Standard prior to submitting the term for review;
e. record the necessary attributes of a term to maintain metadata completeness; and
f. support the Data Steward to review the term periodically or as needed.

(33) The Data Custodian will support the Domain Data Governance Groups to drive data literacy and adoption through:

a. providing training to Data Stewards, and other relevant stakeholders, about the Definition Standard; and
b. developing guidance materials for implementation.

Section 3 - Procedures

(34) Terms approved and managed within the Macquarie University Glossary must follow the Glossary Term Life Cycle Model.

(35) Terms must be managed in accordance with the stages documented in Table 1 Glossary Life Cycle Stages below:

Life Cycle Stage	Step	Responsibility	Process Details

1) Proposed	Propose Term	University Community	Glossary term (with or without a proposed definition) is submitted for inclusion in the University Glossary. This can be done by anyone.
	Validate Proposed Term	Data Custodian	Proposed term is reviewed to see if the term already exists with a different definition or different name, noting: 1. if the term exists under a different name, the definition is reviewed with the Proposer to confirm the definition is the same; 2. if the definition is different, the new term name must be changed; or 3. if the term does not exist, the term is submitted for prioritisation.
	Assign to a Data Governance Group	Data Custodian	Agree ownership of term to a domain area and assign to one Domain Data Governance Group or establish a new Domain Data Governance Group if required.
	Prioritise Proposed Term(s)	Data Governance Group	Proposed terms are reviewed within the appointed Domain Data Governance Group. Priority for inclusion in the University Glossary is established.
2) Assigned	Assign to a Library	Data Governance Group	Assign the term to an existing library within the Domain Data Governance Group or establish a new library within the Domain Data Governance Group as required.
	Assign to a Data Steward	Data Governance Group	Assign a Data Steward to a library who will approve the term, and all terms within that library, on behalf of the Data Governance Group.
	Research/Analysis	Data Custodian	Collect existing definitions of the term, analyse, and identify inconsistencies. Verify use of the term in existing University policies. Verify terms and definitions against industry definitions and regulatory definitions e.g. Tertiary Collection of Student Information (TCSI), Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).
3) In Development	Develop Definition	Data Custodian	Apply Definition Standards. Collaborate with Data Steward and identified stakeholders (and Working Group if established) and: 1. conduct workshop if necessary (for difficult or contentious terms); and 2. record necessary attributes of term e.g. Steward, related terms, review cycle.
	Proposer Engagement	Data Custodian University Community	Engage with the Proposer of the term to develop the initial definition.
	Data Steward and Stakeholder Collaboration	Data Custodian Data Steward	Identify any additional stakeholders of the term. Collaborate with the Data Steward and relevant stakeholders to develop the definition.
	Establish Working Group (if required)	Data Governance Group	Establish a Glossary Term Working Group if required (upon recommendation of Data Custodian and/or Data Steward).

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4) Reviewed	Submit Definition for Approval	Data Custodian	Quality check the draft definition against the Definition Standard before the term is submitted for approval. Submit recommended term definition to Data Steward for approval, noting: 1. if term is used by multiple areas (i.e. has many stakeholders), agreement must first be obtained from the relevant stakeholders; and 2. if the definition cannot be agreed, the term definition is escalated to the relevant Domain Data Governance Group and then to the Data Governance Executive Sponsor.
	Review Definition	Data Steward	The term definition is reviewed. Review period is set if required.
	Periodic Review	Data Steward	Data Steward and Data Custodian are notified of approved terms that are due for review or if the term definition is challenged after approval. A term may be challenged by contacting the Data Custodian in the Business Intelligence and Reporting team. The term definition is reviewed with the following outcomes: 1. definition is confirmed, and the term remains approved; 2. the definition requires an update, the Data Custodian is notified, and the term is put back to 'in development' stage; or 3. the term is archived i.e. the term is no longer fit for purpose or replaced by a new term.
5) Approved	Approve Term	Data Steward Domain Data Governance Group and/or the Data Governance Executive Sponsor	The term definition is approved. In approving a definition, the Data Steward certifies that there has been appropriate consultation and research involved in the writing of the definition. If a definition cannot be agreed in the review stage, the term definition is escalated to the relevant Domain Data Governance Group and/or the Data Governance Executive Sponsor. All new or revised definitions are communicated to identified stakeholders in the University Community. Once approved, a definition is official and a definition mandate is set, noting: 1. a grace period may be given for compliance; and 2. the definition mandate will establish the date upon which the definition must be adhered to. A process for monitoring adherence must be established.
	Archive Term	Data Steward	Glossary term is archived i.e. term is no longer used and/or is replaced by a new term. If replaced by a new term, the term is tagged as replaced by a new term, and a link to the new term is established. Retired terms are communicated to University Community.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(36) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(37) The following definitions apply for the Purposes of this Policy:

a. Data Steward means a member of staff that will be responsible for reviewing and approving one or more terms within the Glossary, in consultation with the Data Governance Analyst, based on subject matter expertise.
b. Data Custodian means the responsible person who is trained and assigned to write term definition content for the Glossary, and will coordinate with the relevant Data Governance Group to assign and prioritise terms for inclusion in the Glossary.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	20th February 2026
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Responsible Executive	Jonathan Wylie Vice-President, Strategy, Planning and Performance +61 2 9850 7350
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