

Faculty Research Degrees Committees

Terms of Reference

1. Constitution

- 1.1. The [Academic Council](#) has established Committees in each Faculty, known as the Faculty Research Degrees Committees (FRDCs) which report to the Research & Knowledge Exchange Board (R&KEB) and on some issues to the Faculty Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (FR&KEC). Matters arising at FRDCs that are considered to affect all faculties or be a university-wide issue should be taken to R&KEB by the Head of RETI. Matters arising at FRDCs that are faculty specific should be taken to FR&KEC by the FRDC Chair.

2. Scope

- 2.1. FRDCs are responsible for overseeing the quality and standards of research degree programmes in Faculties.
- 2.2. They administer and approve research degree proposed programmes of work, transfers from MPhil to PhD, examination arrangements, monitor postgraduate research student progress and confer research degree awards, in accordance with the university's Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Awards.
- 2.3. They oversee the implementation of the training of postgraduate research students at the Faculty level and ensure this dovetails with institutional arrangements.
- 2.4. They are responsible for monitoring the quality of supervision of postgraduate research students and for enhancing the quality of such supervision, including recommending mechanisms for achieving this.

3. Membership

- 3.1. The membership for each FRDC shall be as follows:

Ex Officio

- Chair – Senior, research active academic experienced in postgraduate research supervision (will normally have supervised a minimum of five doctoral students to successful completion in the capacity of first supervisor)
- Vice-Chair – normally to be drawn from the designated representatives
- Head of Research and Enterprise Training Institute (RETI)

Other Members

- 4-8 designated representatives from the Faculty
- 1 x Faculty Research Ethics Committee member – may be drawn from the designated representatives
- 1 x External representative from another FRDC

- 3.2. The Chair will be nominated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange), in consultation with the Head of RETI.
- 3.3. The Vice-Chair will be nominated by the Chair.
- 3.4. The Faculty Research Ethics Committee member and designated representatives will be appointed by the appropriate Pro Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the relevant Heads of School and Associate Deans for Research & Knowledge Exchange.
- 3.5. More than 70% of the designated representatives will be experienced in the business of postgraduate research student supervision and will normally have supervised a minimum of three doctoral students to successful completion. The remainder may be drawn from less experienced staff to facilitate staff development.
- 3.6. The external representative who is a member of another FRDC will be appointed through the agreement of the Pro Vice-Chancellors.
- 3.7. A primary role of the Head of RETI is to ensure consistency of operation and decision making across FRDCs. The role also acts as a conduit between the R&KEB and the FRDCs, ensuring important information is communicated.
- 3.8. No one registered as a student for a research degree of the university may be a member of a FRDC.
- 3.9. The Head of RETI will be informed of the membership of FRDCs at the beginning of each academic session, and this membership must be formally recorded in an annex to the consolidated FRDC annual report produced by RETI for the R&KEB.
- 3.10. The membership, including that of the Chair, will be reviewed biennially, with new members being introduced on a phased basis.

4. Secretarial arrangements

- 4.1. The secretary for each FRDC will be provided by RETI.
- 4.2. The secretary of the FRDC will be responsible for organising agendas, producing accurate minutes, and monitoring and reporting on follow-up actions.

5. Frequency of meetings

- 5.1. There will be a minimum of four meetings in each Faculty in each academic year, with more if required.
- 5.2. The dates and venues (where applicable) of meetings will be published by no later than the end of August before the start of the following academic year.

6. Attendance at meetings

- 6.1. Attendance by committee members is expected at every Committee meeting. Should a designated representative be unavailable to attend a meeting, their place may be taken by a designated substitute, who will meet the membership requirement set out in 3.5.

- 6.2. Should the Head of RETI be unable to attend a meeting, a nominee of the Head of RETI may be present, subject to advance approval by the Chair.
- 6.3. At the discretion of the Chair, other staff who are not members of the Committee may be invited to attend on an ad hoc basis for specific items where their attendance can inform and support the Committee. Such attendance will be in a non-decision-making capacity and must be recorded in the minutes.
- 6.4. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange) and the Director of Greenwich Research & Innovation are entitled to attend meetings of the FRDCs as observers.

7. Quorum

- 7.1. The quorum for all meetings will be 50% of the members eligible to attend. This must include the Chair or Vice-Chair.
- 7.2. Where the meeting is quorate but there is inadequate representation amongst the attending members for an agenda item to be addressed, the item will not be considered.

8. Delegated Authority

The Committees are authorised by the Academic Council to approve:

- 8.1. Proposed programmes of work for the degrees of MPhil, MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD (MPhil/PhD), PhD Direct, PhD by Published Work and Professional Doctorate programmes;
- 8.2. The appointment of appropriately qualified supervisors for the postgraduate research student's programme of work and approve the appointment of any additional adviser(s) as appropriate;
- 8.3. Monitor the progress of postgraduate research students and approve satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress decisions;
- 8.4. Arrangements for postgraduate research students who wish to be assessed for transferring their registration from MPhil to PhD;
- 8.5. Receive and consider assessors' reports on postgraduate research students who have been assessed for transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD and, where appropriate, approve the transfer;
- 8.6. Changes to supervisory arrangements for postgraduate research students;
- 8.7. Requests for interruptions and extensions to the period of registration of postgraduate research students;
- 8.8. Requests to change the mode of study of postgraduate research students;
- 8.9. Requests for the withdrawal of postgraduate research students from their programme of study;
- 8.10. Examiners and examination arrangements;
- 8.11. Examiners reports and recommendations;

- 8.12. Receive and consider all documentation relating to a postgraduate research student's examination, including the final recommendation and, where appropriate, confer the relevant award on a student;
- 8.13. Project specifications, supervisory arrangements, examiners for Masters by Research programmes (LLM/MA/MSc);
- 8.14. Upon recommendation from the Higher Doctorate Panel, approve applications and proposed external assessors, and confer awards for Higher Doctorates.

9. Other Duties

The other duties of the Committees shall be to:

- 9.1. Satisfy themselves that the conditions under which a student works meet the university's requirements;
- 9.2. Receive and note examiners' reports relating to Masters by Research programmes (LLM/MA/MSc);
- 9.3. Receive and note postgraduate research student withdrawals/exclusions under university policies, such as the Student Engagement Policy;
- 9.4. Provide feedback to students/supervisors and Faculty designated representatives on the outcome of submissions made to the Committees;
- 9.5. To receive and consider statistical data and any other information relating to the progress of postgraduate research students, either in relation to the university and faculties as a whole, or its schools;
- 9.6. Ensure that institutional requirements for the training of supervisors are met, and implement and monitor mechanisms for the sharing of good practice between supervisors;
- 9.7. Promote the development of the postgraduate research community within faculties through the encouragement of the specific infrastructure support required to enable postgraduate research to progress;
- 9.8. Establish Sub-Committees and Working Groups, as appropriate, to facilitate furthering the work of the Committee;
- 9.9. Report on its activities to the Faculty R&KEC on a regular basis;
- 9.10. Escalate matters for discussion to the R&KEB, via the Head of RETI, where it is considered there would be benefit from discussion at a cross-Faculty/pan-university level;
- 9.11. Escalate matters that cannot be resolved by FRDCs to the appropriate body (e.g. Faculty R&KEC) or person (e.g. Head of School, Associate Dean) within the faculty for consideration. Where the matter cannot be resolved within the faculty, it should be escalated to R&KEB;
- 9.12. Forward a copy of the consolidated annual report to the Faculty R&KEC following consideration at a FRDC meeting; and

- 9.13. Ensure active consideration of equality, diversity, inclusion and sustainability in the conduct of the Committee's business.

10. Standing Orders

- 10.1. The Committees must adhere to the [Standing Orders for Academic and Executive Committees](#).

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