

Terms of Reference (Council approved) - Research Committee

Section 1 - Overview

Research Committee

(1) The Research Committee is established as a University Committee to support the Academic Board.

(2) These Terms of Reference for the Research Committee prescribe the following:

- a. the members of the Research Committee, and their method and term of appointment;
- b. the functions and terms of reference of the Research Committee; and
- c. other matters in connection with the Research Committee and its operation.

(3) The establishment of this Committee and of the Terms of Reference of the Committee to carry out the business of the Academic Board are actions authorised under [Section 23 of the UNE By-law 2005](#). The provisions of these Terms of Reference take effect as a Council Rule made under [Section 29 of the UNE Act](#).

Objectives

(4) The role of the Research Committee is to oversee and report to the Academic Board on the academic governance of research and research training at the University.

Section 2 - Research Committee Membership

Membership

(5) The members of the Research Committee are as follows:

- a. Chair
 - i. The Chair of Research Committee is appointed by the Chair of Academic Board after a call for expressions of interest from Level D/E academic staff.
- b. Deputy Chair:
 - i. Any member of Research Committee who is a staff member can be appointed as the Deputy Chair by the Chair of Academic Board for a period of up to two (2) years.
 - ii. Any power conferred on the Chair by these Terms of Reference and associated Standing Orders may be exercised by the Deputy Chair in the Chair's absence. The Deputy Chair is not required to meet the eligibility of the Chair position when taking on the power conferred on the Chair by these Terms of Reference.
- c. Ex officio members
 - i. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research;
 - ii. A Deputy Chair of Academic Board (if a Deputy Chair of Academic Board is already a member through

having been appointed as the Chair of the Committee, then a Chair of Academic Board nominee who is a senior academic at Level D or E and an elected member of the Board);

- iii. Chair of Academic Board (or nominee who is a senior academic at Level D or E) and an elected member of the Board;
- iv. Chairs of the University's ethics committees;
- v. Chairs of the Faculty Research Committees (normally the Associate Deans Research);
- vi. Chair of the Graduate Research Committee;
- vii. Director, Research Services;
- viii. Director Library Services and University Librarian or nominee; and
- ix. Director, Education Quality.

d. Appointed Members

- i. One research centre Director or equivalent appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research;
- ii. One member of academic staff from each Faculty with a strong research track record appointed by the Committee after an expression of interest process;
- iii. One member of academic staff or HDR current student who identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, appointed by the Committee after an expression of interest process;
- iv. One early career researcher appointed by the Committee after an expression of interest process; and
- v. One HDR current student appointed by the Committee after an expression of interest process. The HDR current student may be a student representative elected to Academic Board, but it is not a requirement.

In attendance

(6) The Research Committee can co-opt members in order to achieve or maintain gender balance, where the membership does not include at least two women and two men, or to provide specialist advice to the committee.

(7) At the discretion of the Chair, the committee can also invite non-voting individuals as observers to attend regular or individual meetings, provide appropriate expertise as necessary and contribute to discussion.

Appointment procedure for appointed members

(8) Appointed members of the Research Committee are appointed when a vacancy occurs.

Appointments

(9) Appointment of members will be conducted as per these Terms of Reference and the Standing Orders – Academic Board and Committees.

Automatic vacancy by an appointed member

(10) An appointed position becomes vacant automatically if:

- a. the appointed member is absent without prior leave from three consecutive Research Committee meetings, or
- b. the appointed member loses his/her original qualification for appointment.

Acting ex officio members

(11) An ex officio member of the Research Committee includes a person who has been appointed on an 'acting' basis to the role.

Term of office

Ex officio members

(12) The ex officio members will be Research Committee members while they hold their primary office.

Appointed members

(13) The term of office of an appointed member is three years. Appointed members may stand for re-appointment.

Gender representation objectives

(14) Gender representation shall accord with the [Gender Representation on Decision-Making and Advisory Committees Policy](#).

Section 3 - Research Committee Functions

Functions

(15) The functions of the Research Committee are:

- a. To oversee the Academic Governance of research and research training at the University and report to the Academic Board on these matters, so as to enable the Academic Board to provide assurance (or otherwise) to the Council.
- b. To the extent they relate to research or research training, the Research Committee will provide assurance (or otherwise) to the Academic Board that processes and structures are established and responsibilities are assigned that collectively:
 - i. achieve effective academic oversight of the quality of research and research training;
 - ii. set and monitor institutional benchmarks for research quality and outcomes;
 - iii. establish and maintain academic leadership at an institutional level, consistent with the types and levels of higher education offered; and
 - iv. provide competent advice to the Academic Board and management on research matters, including advice on research outcomes, policies and practices.
- c. To the extent they relate to research or research training, the Research Committee will provide assurance (or otherwise) to the Academic Board that academic oversight assures the quality of research and research training effectively, including by:
 - i. developing, monitoring and reviewing academic policies and their effectiveness
 - ii. confirming that delegations of academic authority are implemented
 - iii. critically scrutinising, approving and accrediting or advising on approving and accrediting, courses of study and their associated qualifications
 - iv. maintaining oversight of academic and research integrity, including monitoring of potential risks
 - v. monitoring and initiating action to improve performance against institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes
 - vi. critically evaluating the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations
 - vii. evaluating the effectiveness of institutional monitoring, review and improvement of academic activities; and
 - viii. monitoring and reporting to the Academic Board on the quality of research and research training.
- d. To the extent it relates to research or research training, the Research Committee will provide assurance (or otherwise) to the Academic Board that students have opportunities to participate in Academic Governance.

- e. The Research Committee will exercise its academic governance functions in all areas of benchmarking and quality assurance related to research and research training, including ensuring that:
 - i. research is conducted in accordance with an appropriate institutional research policy framework and by appropriately qualified staff;
 - ii. a system for accurate and up-to-date recording of the research outputs of staff and research students is maintained;
 - iii. research training is guided by an appropriate institutional research training policy framework;
 - iv. an appropriate supervisory environment and supervision for research training, including induction, is maintained;
 - v. appropriate governance of coursework components of research training is undertaken; and, also related to research and research training, providing oversight and assurance of:
 - vi. student participation and attainment encompassing admission, credit and recognition of prior learning, orientation and progression, learning outcomes and assessment, qualifications and certification;
 - vii. learning environment encompassing facilities and infrastructure, diversity and equity, wellbeing and safety, student grievances and complaints;
 - viii. teaching encompassing course design, staffing, learning resources and educational support;
 - ix. institutional quality assurance encompassing course approval and accreditation, academic and research integrity, course monitoring, review and delivery with other parties; and
 - x. representation, information and information management encompassing representation of course offerings, information for prospective and current students and information management.
- f. The Research Committee will consider new University rules and policies that are developed in relation to research or research training, and any replacement or major changes to them. If the rule or policy is considered to be in order then the Research Committee will recommend it to the Academic Board for endorsement.
- g. The Research Committee may exercise such other authority as may be delegated to Research Committee in a University Rule.

General

(16) The Research Committee may form working groups from time to time to undertake specific projects and tasks related to their functions.

(17) The Research Committee will exercise and promote academic leadership in governance commensurate with its duties and functions, and take an active role in supporting the achievement of best practice in governance in research and research training, including by:

- a. establishing reviews for compliance and continuous improvement;
- b. informing strategic directions and the achievement of strategic goals; and
- c. providing advice and assurance regarding the pursuit and achievement of research excellence.

Authority

(18) The Research Committee is authorised to seek data and information from the University through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research to meet the Research Committee's duties and functions.

Section 4 - Related Committees

(19) Each Faculty will have a Faculty Research Committee that oversees research and research training matters at a Faculty level.

Section 5 - Authorities

Committee of Academic Board

(20) The Research Committee is established as a committee of Academic Board to perform the functions set out in the Terms of Reference above and all matters ancillary to those functions.

Section 6 - Conduct of Research Committee Business

Reporting

(21) The Research Committee reports to the Academic Board, including in an annual report of the Committee's performance of its functions.

Meetings

(22) The Research Committee will meet at least seven times per year or otherwise as required, in order to perform its functions.

Business papers

(23) Unless the Chair directs otherwise, Research Committee business papers will be distributed to members and official attendees at least seven days prior to the meeting, or such shorter period as is practicable in the circumstances.

(24) Public disclosure of business papers, minutes and other information received by the Committee should only be made via the Chair or Secretary of the Research Committee.

Quorum

(25) At any meeting of the committee, one half of the voting membership plus one constitutes a quorum.

Use of technology

(26) For its business papers, meetings and otherwise to conduct its business, the University Research Committee and its members may use technology including telephone, video-conferencing, telepresence, email and internet as arranged by the Chair and/or Secretary to the committee.

Resolutions

(27) The Research Committee may pass a resolution by 'flying minute' provided that the resolution has been approved by a simple majority of Research Committee members at the time the resolution is made.

Confirmation of minutes

(28) Draft minutes will normally be circulated to members for comment promptly after each meeting. Next, the minutes (with any necessary changes) will be circulated for adoption by the Research Committee. The minutes will be finalised and adopted when they have been approved by a majority of the members that were present at the relevant meeting. Alternatively, the minutes may be included in the business papers for the next Committee meeting and considered and adopted by the Committee at that meeting.

Self-review

(29) Once in every twelve month period, the Research Committee shall devote part of one meeting to the review of its policies, practices and procedures over the preceding twelve months.

Secretary to Research Committee

(30) The University Secretariat will provide secretarial and administrative support to the Research Committee.

Section 7 - Definitions and Interpretation

Definitions

(31) Words and phrases used in this document have the following meanings, unless the context requires otherwise:

- a. Academic Governance means the framework of policies, structures, relationships, systems and processes that collectively provide leadership to and oversight of the University's academic activities (teaching, learning and scholarship, and research and research training) at an institutional level.
- b. Current Student means a person who is at the time a Student and who is enrolled in a higher degree course.
- c. Senior Executive means the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer and her/his direct reports above Director level.
- d. Student means a person who has been accepted into a higher degree by research course at the University.
- e. UNE Act means the [University of New England Act 1993 \(NSW\)](#).
- f. UNE By-law means the [University of New England By-law 2005 \(NSW\)](#).

Interpretation

This document should be interpreted using the following principles.

(32) Where Research Committee membership is defined by reference to an office held (e.g. 'Chair of Academic Board'), that office-bearer is an ex officio member and has all of the same rights and responsibilities (including voting) as other committee members whilst holding the office specified.

(33) This document does not override or otherwise affect:

- a. the [Authorities Retained by Council Rule](#); or
- b. the [Vice-Chancellor Functions Rule](#).
- c. However, it operates under the authority vested in Academic Board by the [UNE Act and UNE By-law to establish committees and terms of reference to carry out the business of Academic Board](#).

Governing documents

(34) The existing Terms of Reference and any other documents governing the Research Committee at the time these new Terms of Reference are approved are replaced and have no further operation.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th July 2024
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Student" - Is an admitted student or an enrolled student, at the relevant time: 1. an admitted student is a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study and who is entitled to enrol in a unit of study or who has completed all of the units in the UNE course of study; 2. an enrolled student is a student who is enrolled in a unit of study at UNE.

"Academic Governance" - Means the framework of policies, structures, relationships, systems and processes that collectively provide leadership to and oversight of the University's academic activities (teaching, learning and scholarship, and research and research training) at an institutional level.