

Terms of Reference (Vice-Chancellor approved) - Graduate Research Committee

Section 1 - Overview

(1) The Graduate Research Committee is established as a University Committee to support the maintenance of effective frameworks and functions of Graduate Research at UNE.

(2) The key objectives of the Committee are:

- a. to provide advice to the Dean, Graduate Research and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (consistent with delegations) on operational/management matters relating to graduate research at UNE; and
- b. to report to the Research Committee of Academic Board on Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) and academic governance matters relevant to the Committee's functions.

(3) These Terms of Reference prescribe:

- a. the members and observers of the Graduate Research Committee, and the method and term of appointment of members;
- b. the functions and terms of reference of the Graduate Research Committee; and
- c. the operation and authority of the Graduate Research Committee.

Section 2 - Membership

(4) The members of the Graduate Research Committee are:

- a. Ex-officio Members
 - i. Dean, Graduate Research, or their delegate (Chair);
 - ii. Associate Dean, Research from each Faculty, or their delegate;
 - iii. Director, Research Services.
- b. Members appointed by the Chair:
 - i. One Director of a Research Centre involved in HDR Candidate supervision;
 - ii. One member of academic staff or current HDR Candidate who identifies as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, appointed by the Chair after an expression of interest process. If there is no response to the EOI process or if the appointed member is unable to participate regularly, the Graduate Research Committee will engage in communication and consultation with the relevant representative member of the Research Committee at or before Research Committee's next meeting;
 - iii. One Current HDR Student appointed by the Chair after an expression of interest process. If there is no response to the EOI process or if the appointed member is unable to participate regularly, the Graduate Research Committee will engage in communication and consultation with the relevant representative member of the Research Committee at or before the next meeting of ResCom; and
 - iv. The Graduate Research Committee may appoint or co-opt up to two individuals (academic staff who are

current Principal Supervisors or HDR Coordinators) as additional appointed members.

(5) In attendance: Observers (non-voting)

- a. One professional staff member whose duties are predominantly engaged in HDR administration, appointed by the Chair to act as Secretary to the Committee;
- b. One Graduate Research School Manager; and
- c. At the discretion of the Chair, the Committee can also invite non-voting individuals as observers to attend meetings, provide appropriate expertise as necessary and contribute to discussion upon invitation by the Chair.

Term of Office

Ex-officio Members

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

Appointed and Co-opted Members

(7) Members appointed to the Committee shall have tenure for a two-year term unless a shorter term is agreed by the Chair and potential member. The member may stand for reappointment for up to three terms.

(8) Members co-opted to the Committee shall have tenure for one-year renewable to a maximum of three years.

Chair

(9) The Dean, Graduate Research or their delegate is an ex-officio member and Chair of the Committee. A temporary Deputy Chair may be appointed from the voting members for a specific meeting or a specific section of a meeting if the Chair or delegate is unavailable or has a conflict of interest.

Gender Representation Objectives

(10) Gender representation shall accord with the [Gender Representation on Decision-Making and Advisory Committees Policy](#). The objective will be to ensure, so far as is practicable, that the membership of the Graduate Research Committee includes at least two members of each gender.

Section 3 - Graduate Research Committee Functions

Advisory Functions

(11) The Graduate Research Committee will provide advice and recommendations to the Dean, Graduate Research and to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, consistent with delegations, with regards to:

- a. alignment of Graduate Research functions or activities and UNE strategy and research outcomes;
- b. business cases for new, amended or disestablished Higher Degree Research awards;
- c. development and/or review of Higher Degree by Research programs and pathways;
- d. allocation of Research Training Program Scholarships and other research postgraduate scholarships;
- e. changes or updates to policies or associated information relating to graduate research and HDR Students (approval of these policy instruments will be subject to endorsement or approval by academic governance or management consistent with delegations);
- f. appointment of examiners; consideration of examiners' reports; determination of outcomes regarding the award of higher degrees by research; determination of outcomes of the award of Doctoral Research Medals, and approval of HDR graduand lists; and

g. other matters relating to higher degree research candidature or facility management or operations.

(12) The Graduate Research Committee will provide recommendations to the Research Committee regarding:

- a. proposals for new, amended or disestablishment of higher degree by research courses and course rules;
- b. proposed new or reviewed policies relating to:
 - i. research training (e.g. higher degree by research courses, standards, admission, candidature including progress, training, assessment, issuing of medals and prizes);
 - ii. the research student experience;
 - iii. higher degree research supervision; and
 - iv. HDR research integrity, research risk management and mitigations as it relates to Graduate Research at UNE and with third parties/centres and institutes.

Monitoring Functions

(13) The Graduate Research Committee will monitor and will report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and/or Research Committee of Academic Board consistent with delegated functions, with regard to:

- a. the conformance of Graduate Research activities at UNE with:
 - i. UNE policies and practice relating to Graduate Research at UNE;
 - ii. Agreed framework for allocation of HDR scholarships and prizes; and
 - iii. National codes and protocols for the conduct of graduate research at Australian universities and institutions;
- b. Information and metrics relevant to the performance and quality of Graduate Research at UNE including:
 - i. measures of candidate progress and performance evidenced in student/graduate quality assurance surveys and/or milestones of candidature progress reporting;
 - ii. measures of student and/or student cohort outcomes compared to institutional and/or sector benchmarks;
 - iii. measures of supervisor activities including number of active supervisions, engagement in training/scholarship, and maintaining research active status;
 - iv. complaints and appeals relating to HDR Students and HDR supervisors; and
 - v. Autonomous Sanctions, English Language Proficiency waivers and other information and metrics confirmed by the Chair as relevant to the Committee's functions.

Communication Functions

(14) The Committee will aim to support effective two-way communication, reporting, and exchange of ideas between the Faculties, Graduate Research School, Senior Management and Academic Governance regarding all matters relating to higher degree by research.

Approval Functions

(15) In carrying out its duties and functions, the Committee has authority to amend and approve practices and procedures of the Graduate Research School.

(16) As delegate of the DVCR, the Chair of the Graduate Research Committee is vested with approval functions for operational HDR candidature management matters from admission to graduation. This may include:

- a. the award and management of HDR scholarships;
- b. appointment of HDR examiners;

- c. approval of examination outcomes for the award of higher degrees by research;
- d. determination of outcomes of the award of Doctoral Research Medals; and
- e. approval of HDR graduands lists.

Authority

(17) The Chair may seek data and information from the University through Research Services to meet the Graduate Research Committee's duties and functions.

Section 4 - Delegation

(18) The provisions of these Terms of Reference take effect under the authority of Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer consistent with the Section 28(1)(a) of the [University of New England Act 1993 \(NSW\)](#). The Graduate Research Committee has delegated authority from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer to perform on its behalf the advisory, monitoring, communication, and approval functions set out in the Terms of Reference above, and all matters ancillary to those functions.

Section 5 - Conduct of Graduate Research Committee Business

Reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and to the Research Committee

(19) The Chair of the Graduate Research Committee will report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR) on operational matters considered by the Committee, and report to the Research Committee on matters of policy and governance.

Meetings

(20) The Graduate Research Committee will meet six times per year or as required to perform its functions.

Business Papers

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

(22) Business of the Graduate Research Committee may be confidential and any disclosure of business papers, minutes, or other information associated with the work of the Committee will only be done so with the permission of the Chair or DVCR.

Quorum

(23) At any meeting of the Graduate Research Committee, one half of the voting membership plus one constitutes a quorum. Members are requested to submit apologies and nominate a delegate to represent their area when they are unable to attend.

Use of Technology

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

Resolutions

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

Confirmation of Minutes

(26) 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 Graduate 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

(27) Once annually the Graduate Research Committee shall devote part of one meeting to the review of its policies, practices and procedures over the preceding twelve months.

Secretary to the Graduate Research Committee

(28) UNE Graduate Research School will provide secretarial and administrative support to the Graduate Research Committee.

Section 6 - Interpretation

(29) This document should be interpreted using the following principles:

- a. Where Graduate Research Committee membership is defined by reference to an office held (eg. 'Director, Research Services'), that office-bearer is a member ex-officio and has all of the same rights and responsibilities (including voting) as other Committee members whilst holding the office specified.
- b. This document does not override or otherwise affect:
 - i. the [UNE Delegations Framework Rule](#), or
 - ii. the [Vice-Chancellor Functions Rule](#).

(30) The existing terms of reference, constitution, and any other documents governing the Graduate Research Committee, Graduate Research Subcommittee or Higher Degree Research Committee at the time of these new Terms of Reference are approved, are replaced and have no further operation.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th May 2024
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Approval Authority	Director Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	8th May 2024
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Chris Armstrong Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
Enquiries Contact	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) +61 2 6773 3715

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Graduate" - Is a person who has completed the requirements for a course and has had their award conferred on them by the University Council.

"Postgraduate" - Relates to a course or a student in that course leading to the award of Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master or Doctor.

"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.

"Prize" - Is an award usually made on the basis of academic performance. The benefit is usually financial but may include a certificate or some other form of recognition.

"Disclosure" - Refers to the provision of personal information to a party or person external to the University. Provision of personal information internally may also be considered a disclosure where the personal information is about a staff member, or the information is health information.

"Research" - Is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative (defined by the Australian Research Council).

"Email" - Means electronic mail.

"HDR Student" - Means an HDR candidate who is enrolled in an higher degree research program at UNE.

"HDR Candidate" - Means a Higher Degree Research student.

"Normally" - Where the word 'normally' is used in a rule, policy, procedure or guideline, it means that it is the default position that must be followed unless exceptional circumstances exist that require a departure from the default position, as determined by the Rule Administrator acting reasonably.

"Professional Staff" - Means all employees of the University who are employed at Higher Education Officer Level 1 to 10.

"Course" - Course means a syllabus, a curriculum, a training package, units of study, or structured workplace learning, the successful completion of which leads to the conferral of an award on the student by the University

(including but not limited to a regulated qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework).

"Quality Assurance" - Is the ongoing, internal process of assessing a university's outcomes against its aims.

"Standard" - Is an agreed specification or other criterion used as a rule, guidelines or definition of a level of performance or achievement.

"Benchmark" - Means to evaluate processes, practices and outcomes by comparison with sector and discipline norms. (Assessment Rule)

"Admission" - The process of assessment of an application leading to entitlement to enrol as a student in a course leading to an award of the University.

"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.

"Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander" - Is a person who is of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, and is accepted and known as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which they have lived.

"Faculty" - An organisational unit consisting of a group of related Schools, which is responsible for coordinating the management and quality of the teaching and research conducted by those Schools.

"Senior Management" - Means staff at Dean/Director level and above

"Principal Supervisor" - Means the UNE staff member or adjunct or honorary staff member who has principal responsibility for the research candidature of a HDR Student.

"Approval" - A statement to indicate the official acceptance of a proposal, recommendation, or other matter. It is a function of the role/committee with delegated authority to do so.