

Faculty Research Degree Committees: Terms of Reference

Purpose

Faculty Research Degree Committees (FRDCs) are accountable via the relevant Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee to Faculty Board for promoting high quality postgraduate research education across all disciplines within the Faculty and for the implementation of the University's Enhancement Framework as it relates to Research Degrees.

FRDCs implement policies and procedures for the assessment of PGR Students and make recommendations for the approval of examination arrangements for individual students to the Research Degrees Award Board.

Each FRDC also takes direction from and provides reports to the Graduate School Sub-Committee on matters within its area of competence.

Membership

Chair, nominated by the PVC/ Executive Dean

Associate Dean (Research and KE)

Associate Heads of Department (or other individuals with significant responsibility for research as nominated by the Executive Dean)

Overall Faculty Lead for Post Graduate Activity

Director of Student and Academic Services (or nominee)

Two postgraduate research student representatives

In Attendance

Committee Officer

The membership can also include additional members in attendance, these members do not have voting rights. The Chair has discretion to determine whether and how many post-holders or other individuals may attend a meeting in a non-voting capacity.

The membership can include up to two co-opted members with voting rights. Co-opted members are appointed by the Committee in consultation with the Chair.

Responsibility

Faculty Research Degree Committees are responsible for:

- Promoting high quality postgraduate research education across all disciplines and having oversight of:
 - the co-ordination of all matters relating to postgraduate research students (including students registered on professional doctorates), and to provide enhanced visibility and coherence of graduate study both internally and externally;
 - recruitment strategy, admissions policy, monitoring of progress, completion

- rates and any other areas of postgraduate research provision that require additional monitoring or enhancement in response to evolving internal or external quality assurance requirements;
 - strategies to enhance the academic, administrative, and social integration of the postgraduate community, and to make recommendations on the adequacy of levels of welfare and social provision for postgraduate research students;
 - supervisory practice including the University's Research Training Programme and other central events in support of postgraduate research study as shall be organised from time to time;
 - the provision of comprehensive training courses for postgraduate students;
 - standards of postgraduate research education in the University;
 - opportunities for interdisciplinarity within postgraduate activity.
- Ensuring the appropriate implementation of policies and procedures for the assessment and examining of postgraduate research students, including the approval of examination arrangements for individual supervised postgraduate research students and for the maintenance of the academic quality and standards of the examination process;
- Making regular reports to the Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and to the Research Degrees Award Board on matters relating to the academic standards and quality of postgraduate research provision;
- Ensuring active consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion in the conduct of its business;
- Evaluating annually its own performance to ensure academic governance arrangements enhance institutional performance and add value;
- Ensuring any task-and-finish groups or special interest groups it creates can discharge their functions, having Terms of Reference with clear responsibilities and delegated authorities.

Accountability

Faculty Research Degree Committees are accountable to the relevant Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (FRKEC) and report to it on:

- The operation and management of postgraduate research in the Faculty and matters concerning the postgraduate research student experience;
- Proposals for new policies and frameworks within its area of competence;
- Proposals for changes to its terms of reference, membership or priorities or to those of any sub-groups established to support delivery of its terms of reference;
- Any matters or priority areas referred to it for action by the Chair of FRKEC.

Each FRDC must also take direction from and provide reports to the Graduate School Sub-Committee on issues and developments within its area of competence, including providing regular and ad hoc reports on matters which require University-level consideration and developing/monitoring action plans as appropriate.

Each FRDC also reports to the Research Degrees Award Board on matters concerning the examination arrangements for individual PGR students.

Each FRDC provides an annual assurance report to the relevant FRKEC, through which it demonstrates how it has fulfilled its Terms of Reference and assesses its own effectiveness. The requirements for the report will be specified by Faculty Board, in consultation with RKEC and LTSEC.

Administration

Faculty Research Degree Committees will meet a minimum of three times a year. The duration of meetings will be no longer than three hours. The Quorum for meetings is one-third of members eligible to attend.

Representative members who are nominated to represent a particular constituency will be rotated annually.

Co-opted members will serve a maximum three-year term.

A committee officer will be identified to support the Chair in the effective and efficient conduct of the Committee's business.

Review

The Terms of Reference for Faculty Research Degree Committees will be reviewed annually to ensure they are still relevant, decision-making structures are effective and FRDCs can effectively discharge their duties. As part of the review consideration should be undertaken to how the Committee can improve and better integrate practices which support equality, diversity and inclusivity.