

RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE



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1 ESTABLISHMENT

The Research Higher Degrees Committee is a sub-committee of Academic Board, and will provide reports and/or advice to Academic Board and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

2 FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee's functions and responsibilities are to:

- 2.1 Review and report to Academic Board on policies, procedures, practices and regulations governing research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses, including entry requirements, progression and examination.
- 2.2 Develop proposals for research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses and their constituent units, ensuring awards align academically with research capability and strategic direction. This should include consultation with the Education Committee on research higher degree qualifying courses. (Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for information regarding the approvals pathways for new course and unit proposals).

- 2.3 Undertake academic planning and development in relation to research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses and their constituent units, including:
- developing proposals for courses and units in compliance with the [Higher Education Qualifications Policy and Procedure](#). The Proposer of any new course or unit must attend the meeting to speak to their proposal, to allow fulsome debate by the Committee and more effective actioning of any revisions that might be required.
 - ensuring such proposals are compliant with academic standards within the [Higher Education Standards Framework](#), adhere to the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#), are consistent with the [Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#), and are consistent with the relevant Course Rules.
- 2.4 Undertake academic planning and enhancement in relation to the courses and constituent units including, but not limited to:
- consideration of course and unit evaluations and other forms of student feedback
 - curriculum materials and other learning resources
 - information relating to admissions requirements and expectations
 - attrition, progression and completion rates
 - market research and demand
 - consistent implementation of academic standards and information, and
 - foster a culture of reflective practice among all staff to enhance a culture of continuous quality improvement.
- 2.5 Make recommendation to Academic Board on cases where there is occasion to seek an exception to the course rules governing research higher degree courses or research higher degree qualifying courses.
- 2.6 Ensure research higher degree and related qualifying courses align with research capability and strategic direction and report against this to Academic Board as part of the five-yearly review and re-accreditation process.
- 2.7 Recommend to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) the award of research higher degrees, based on the recommendation of the Chair of the Examination Panel.
- 2.8 Advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on strategic and resource issues affecting research higher degree activities.
- 2.9 Report to Academic Board on the development and application of principles governing the allocation of research scholarships, including criteria for their award, continuation, suspension and termination.
- 2.10 Foster excellence in the supervision of research higher degree candidates, including training and induction programs for supervisors, and criteria for the appointment of supervisory panels.
- 2.11 Develop, review and report to Academic Board policies and practices to monitor and enhance the quality and impact of research outcomes relating to research higher degree operations.
- 2.12 In consultation with the Divisions, Institutes, Centres and Academies, promote the research opportunities available to research higher degree candidates.
- 2.13 Consider, and report to Academic Board, course review reports for research higher degree and research higher degree qualifying courses and their constituent units to ensure compliance with University policy and implementation of report recommendations.
- 2.14 Monitor institutional statistics and data analysis, statistical projections, modelling and relevant analysis related to research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses and provide advice to Academic Board and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 2.15 Monitor and review benchmarking relevant to research higher degrees and research higher degree qualifying courses within the University and sector and suggest opportunities for further benchmarking.

2.16 The Committee will deal with such other matters pertaining to research training as may be referred to it.

Assessment meetings

2.17 Before certification of grades each term, assessment meetings will be held to action the Committee's authority to determine results in all units forming research higher degree qualifying courses.

2.18 Results shall be considered by the relevant Unit Coordinator and the Dean, School of Graduate Research, prior to being tabled at the Assessment Meeting.

3 COURSE REFERENCE MEETING

The Committee shall meet at least once per year with relevant industry representatives and interested parties to meet the requirements of a Course Reference Committee.

In this capacity, the Committee shall:

- provide advice regarding the adequacy of the courses in consideration of industry, government and community needs, including proposals for new or revised courses or units, to the Dean, School of Graduate Research and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), and
- facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance, implementation and performance of courses.

4 DELEGATED AUTHORITIES

Academic Board has delegated to this Committee the authority to:

- approve admission to candidature for the University's research higher degree and research higher degree qualifying courses
- appoint supervisors, thesis examiners and Confirmation of Candidature reviewers, taking into account the recommendation of the appropriate School
- receive periodic reports on the progress of postgraduate research candidates and take appropriate action on such reports
- develop and review the selection criteria for postgraduate research awards and recommend awardees
- accredit new research higher degree and research higher degree qualifying courses, and changes to those courses
- approve course review panel membership proposals for research higher degree and research higher degree qualifying courses
- approve five-yearly course and unit review and re-accreditation proposals for research higher degree and research higher degree qualifying courses and re-accredit those courses accordingly
- approve the termination of terminate research higher degree and research higher degree qualifying courses
- accredit new units and changes to units which form part of research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses for candidate enrolment purposes
- approve the termination of units which form part of research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses
- approve Annual Course Enhancement Reports and Annual Unit Enhancement Reports
- determine results in all research higher degrees qualifying units and non-award units for which students are awarded a final grade, in accordance with the Grades and Results Procedure, and
- approve and expire all policy documents which are considered within its Terms of Reference.

5 REFERRAL OF MATTERS

The Committee may refer any item to Academic Board for discussion, consideration and/or action, and may refer relevant matters for action or noting to other committees or officers as appropriate.

6 SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee may establish standing or ad hoc sub-committees and approve their Terms of Reference, which must be constructed to ensure consistency and coordination between the functions of all sub-committees. The terms of reference of any sub-committee which has a role in the University's academic governance processes must be approved by Academic Board. The Committee may co-opt staff to serve on its sub-committees and/or working parties.

The Committee shall receive reports from its sub-committees and be responsible for monitoring and evaluating each sub-committee's activities against their functions and responsibilities.

7 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE

The Committee shall comprise:

Ex-officio members:

- Dean, School of Graduate Research
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- Deputy Deans (Research)

Nominated members:

- One representative of the Research Division, nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Elected members:

- Two academic representatives from across the University who must be registered research supervisors, elected by registered research supervisors. Representatives shall be on full-time or fractional appointments of 0.5 and above, and a contract that runs for at least as long as the term of office
- One Early Career Researcher, defined as a member of University staff within five years of conferral of their Research Higher Degree, and elected by academic staff of the University, who have a term of research-relevant employment within the University
- One enrolled postgraduate research student, elected by enrolled postgraduate research students

All members are expected to represent their full constituency and maintain effective communications between their school/division/unit and the Committee, as appropriate.

Ex-officio members may send a nominee when unable to attend a meeting, or nominate a standing nominee.

Nominated and elected members shall serve for a term of two years. Student members shall serve for a term of one year and may serve no more than two terms of office on the Committee. To retain membership, the student member must maintain their enrolment with the University.

To ensure continuity of Committee operations, the term of office of one half of the nominated and elected members shall conclude each year, providing a rolling membership.

The Committee's membership must include appropriate gender representation.

8 COURSE REFERENCE MEETING MEMBERSHIP

When holding a Course Reference meeting, the standard membership of the Committee shall be augmented with at least seven members representing a range of interested parties, including but not limited to:

- up to two CQUniversity Research Higher Degree Alumni
- up to two employers of CQUniversity research higher degree graduates
- up to two Government and industry stakeholders with interests in research training, and
- a Dean of Graduate Research (or equivalent) from another Australian University.

Additional members may also be co-opted by the Committee over time to provide input into particular matters (for example, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)).

These members shall be appointed for a period of two years by the Dean, School of Graduate Research, in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

9 RIGHTS OF AUDIENCE AND DEBATE

The Committee may extend rights of audience and debate on a standing or ad hoc basis.

Those holding the following or equivalent positions (or their nominee) shall have standing rights of audience and debate at meetings:

- Academic Lead (Research Higher Degree Experience)
- Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee members.

Staff and external stakeholders may request the opportunity to address the Committee at any time. The Chair will consider and determine these requests.

10 CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

The Chair shall be the Dean, School of Graduate Research. The Chair shall serve for the duration of their appointment.

The Deputy Chair shall be elected by and from the Committee membership. The Deputy Chair shall serve for a term of office of two years.

The Chair shall nominate an alternate Deputy Chair if the Chair and Deputy Chair are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

11 SECRETARY

The Director, Governance shall nominate the Secretary.

12 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Committee shall have an Executive Committee, empowered to act between meetings where urgent business arises, to consider recommendations for the award of research higher degrees to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), consider the allocation of Research Higher Degree scholarships, and to form ad hoc sub-committees if required. Executive Committee decisions will be reported to this Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

The Executive Committee shall comprise

- the Dean, School of Graduate Research (Chair)
- one Deputy Dean (Research) or their nominee, plus
- revolving attendance by at least one other academic committee member, nominated by Chair.

The revolving position will be recruited such that a balance of representation is achieved from across the Tertiary Education Schools, and having regard to the research discipline areas being considered on the agenda.

13 CASUAL VACANCIES

A casual vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the [Election of Members to University Committees Procedure](#) or in accordance with the original nomination requirements.

14 REMOVAL OF A MEMBER FROM OFFICE

The Committee may terminate a person's membership for misconduct by a vote of two-thirds of those present at a committee meeting called in accordance with these terms of reference, and for which due notice of the motion to terminate the person's membership has been given.

Where a member or their nominee does not attend three consecutive meetings without adequate cause, that person's membership may be terminated. A person whose membership has been terminated may apply to the Executive Committee to have their membership reinstated.

15 QUORUM

The quorum for a committee meeting shall be 50% of the membership, plus one.

The quorum for a Course Reference meeting is defined as 50% of the standard membership plus 50% of the external parties, plus one.

Where a loss of quorum is identified, the meeting may be adjourned until a time the Chair determines. Any matters for decision considered when the meeting is inquorate must be subsequently ratified by the Executive Committee or at the next Committee meeting before those decisions can be actioned.

16 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Committee members are required to declare to the Chair any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest they may have with any item on the Committee's agenda.

If the Chair or Committee deems a member to have a conflict of interest in a matter before the Committee, the member will be excused from committee discussions and deliberations on that matter.

Further details on identifying and dealing with a conflict of interest are provided in the [Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure](#).

17 MEETINGS

Committee meetings may be held face-to face, by telephone, videoconference, or other electronic means. The Committee shall determine its meeting schedule annually in advance and meet as scheduled.

Committee decisions may be made at a duly called and constituted meeting, or by a resolution in writing to all members and physically or electronically signed by at least a quorum of members.

Committee members are required to fully prepare for each meeting, read the documentation in advance, and make every reasonable effort to attend each meeting.

18 ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Members joining the Committee for external Course Reference Meetings will be provided with access to the Committee's website and any other resources they reasonably require to fulfil their duties as a Committee member.

19 OBSERVERS AND VISITORS

Observers are welcome with the Chair's prior permission and provided they advise the Secretary in advance.

Observers are entitled to see and hear the proceedings of the meeting but have no voting rights and no right to speak at meetings, unless invited to do so by the Chair. Observers must leave the meeting when requested by the Chair, or if any matters are to be considered in closed session.

20 AGENDAS AND MINUTES

Agendas and associated documentation will be distributed three working days before the meeting, via the Committee StaffNet page. Members will be notified by email of the location and availability of material. Members are encouraged to bring laptops, iPads or similar to the meetings and view the agenda online during the meeting.

Only with the Chair's permission will late papers or the tabling of papers be accepted. All papers must be submitted to the Secretary by the specified submission deadline.

Committee records are subject to the Queensland [Public Records Act 2002](#) and must be retained by the Secretary in accordance with the University's [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#).

Minutes are to be prepared from each meeting. The Chair will review the draft minutes and action sheet of each meeting, after which the Secretary will circulate the documents to all committee members and include them in the agenda papers for the next meeting.

21 EVALUATION AND REVIEW

To ensure the Committee is fulfilling its duties, it will undertake an annual self-assessment of its performance against these terms of reference and provide that information to Academic Board, along with any information Academic Board requests to facilitate its review of the Committee's performance and its membership.

The Administrator shall review these terms of reference every two years, in conjunction with the Committee, and provide a report, including any recommendations, to Academic Board.

22 FEEDBACK

University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@cqu.edu.au.

23 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Research Higher Degrees Committee
Administrator	Director, Governance
Next Review Date	28/06/2020

Approval and Amendment History	Details
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Notes	

24 APPENDIX A: APPROVALS PATHWAY FOR RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE AND RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE QUALIFYING COURSES

