

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, recommendations and/or advice to Academic Board and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

2 FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Research Higher Degrees Committee is responsible for the creation, maintenance and delivery of research higher degree courses and units, and research higher degree qualifying courses and units.

The Committee's functions and responsibilities are to:

- 2.1 Monitor the research training environment to ensure compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#) (Cwlth); particularly in relation to Research and Research Training (Section 4) and Institutional Quality Assurance (Section 5).

- 2.2 Review and report to Academic Board on:
- performance and quality of research higher degrees and research qualifying courses, including matters of research integrity and misconduct by candidates and research outputs generated by research trainees
 - significant changes to the policy and procedure framework governing research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses, and
 - strategic and resource issues affecting research higher degree activities, including allocation of scholarships, supervision capacity and quality, and access to university infrastructure.
- 2.3 Undertake academic planning and development in relation to research higher degree courses and research higher degree qualifying courses and their constituent units, ensuring awards align academically with research capability and strategic direction. Such activities will include:
- developing proposals for courses and units in compliance with the [Higher Education Qualifications Policy and Procedure](#) and consistent with the [Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#), where this applies.
 - ensuring such proposals adhere to the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#).
- Appendix A provides information regarding the approvals pathways for new course and unit proposals.
- 2.4 Analyse information relating to course performance and sector benchmarking and apply this to enhance research course outcomes. This may include but is 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, and
 - relevant institutional statistics and data analysis, statistical projections and modelling.
- 2.5 The Committee will deal with such other matters pertaining to research training and research qualifying courses as may be referred to it by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or a University governance committee.
- 2.6 At least once per year, the Committee will jointly convene with the Research Committee to consider matters of research strategy, development and resourcing. This meeting will be chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Research course assessment meetings

- 2.7 Research course assessment meeting will be held a minimum of three times per year, to action the Committee's authority to determine results in all units forming research higher degree qualifying courses. This Course Committee shall operate as per the [Course Committee Terms of Reference](#).
- 2.8 Before certification of grades each term, results shall be considered by the relevant Unit Coordinator and the Dean, School of Graduate Research, prior to being tabled at a course assessment meeting for final determination.

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), 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:

- 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 their constituent units, including changes to and termination of those courses and units
- 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 12 month progress reports for five-yearly course and unit review and re-accreditations
- approve annual course enhancement reports, 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 employees 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)
- one Research Higher Degree Lead, or equivalent research leadership position, from each of the Tertiary Education Schools that host research higher degrees candidates
- Director, Office of Research
- Coordinator, Research Higher Degrees.

Nominated members:

- one representative of the Student Representative Council, who is an enrolled research higher degree student, nominated by the Student Representative Council
- one representative from research coursework delivery, nominated by the Dean, School of Graduate Research.

Elected members:

- two academic representatives who must be registered research supervisors

- one research active academic employee who meets the criteria as an early-career researcher, as defined by the [Australian Research Council](#).

Co-opted members:

- Such other members may be co-opted by the Chair to provide input into particular matters and ensure representation consistent with the Committee's responsibilities.

Gender representation on the Committee's membership is encouraged.

All members are expected to represent their full constituency and maintain effective communications between their organisational area and the Committee, as appropriate

New members will, on their appointment, receive relevant induction information and briefings to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

Terms of office

Ex-officio members shall serve for the duration of their appointment. Ex-officio members may send a nominee when unable to attend meetings or nominate a standing nominee.

Where a Research Higher Degree Lead cannot attend a meeting, the Deputy Dean (Research) for the relevant School will attend in their place.

Elected and nominated members shall serve for a term of two years. To ensure continuity of Committee operations, the term of office of one half of the elected members shall initially serve for a term of one year, with all elected members subsequently serving for a term of two years.

The student member shall serve for a term of one year and may serve no more than two consecutive terms on the Committee. To retain membership, the student member must maintain their enrolment with the University.

Leave of absence

Where a member is aware that they will be absent from the University and unable to attend Committee meetings for an extended period of time, the member may apply to the Chair for leave of absence for the period. For the purpose of calculating membership and quorum, the membership will be reduced by the number of members on leave of absence at the time of the meeting.

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, and
- up to two Government and industry stakeholders with interests in research training.

Other members may also be co-opted by the Committee to provide input into particular matters.

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:

- President, Academic Board
- Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee members

- Deputy Deans (Research)
- Secretary, Academic Board

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

10 OBSERVERS

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.

11 CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

The Chair shall be the Dean, School of Graduate Research.

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 Chair if the Chair and Deputy Chair are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

12 SECRETARY

The Secretary, Academic Board shall nominate the Secretary.

13 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Committee shall have an Executive Committee, empowered to act between meetings where urgent business arises. Executive Committee decisions will be reported to this Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

The Executive Committee shall comprise

- Chair,
- Deputy Chair, and
- Revolving attendance by at least one other academic committee member, nominated by the Chair. These revolving positions will be recruited such that a balance of representation is achieved from across the Tertiary Education Schools and having regard to the matters being considered on the agenda.

14 CASUAL VACANCIES

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

15 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.

16 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.

17 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](#).

18 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 the Executive Committee and physically or electronically signed by at least a quorum of Executive Committee members (flying minute).

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

19 ACCESS TO RESOURCES

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

20 AGENDAS AND MINUTES

Agendas and associated documentation will be distributed at least three working days before the meeting, via the Committee page on StaffNet. Members will be notified by email of the location and availability of material. Members are encouraged to view the agenda electronically 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 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#)

[Election of Members to University Committees Procedure](#)

[Grades and Results Policy](#)

[Higher Education Qualifications Policy and Procedure](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#) (Cwlth)

23 FEEDBACK

Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

24 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

| Approval and Review | Details |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Approval Authority | Academic Board |
| Advisory Committee to Approval Authority | Research Higher Degrees Committee |
| Administrator | Secretary, Academic Board |
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| Notes | |

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

