

Research Degree Subcommittee Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Establishment

Background

(1) The Research Degree Subcommittee (the Subcommittee), formerly called the Thesis Examination Subcommittee, was established by the Academic Senate in May 2016 under clause 36(c) of the [Academic Senate Rules](#) and is directly responsible and accountable to the Research and Research Training Committee of the Academic Senate for the exercise of its responsibilities.

(2) This Terms of Reference sets out the purpose, authority, membership, responsibilities, and operation of the Subcommittee.

Purpose

(3) The Research Degree Subcommittee is responsible for identifying and promoting best practice in graduate research degrees, including thesis examination processes and adherence to University policies and procedures. It provides advice and recommendations regarding the process, quality, and outcome of Graduate (GR) Research degrees and theses submitted for examination in accordance with policies of Academic Senate relating to the GR examination processes.

Authority

(4) The Subcommittee is authorised by the Academic Senate to approve the appointment of examiners, in accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Procedure](#).

(5) The Subcommittee has no delegation or authorisations for matters identified in the [Delegations of Authority Register](#). All responsibilities are identified in Section 3 of these Terms of Reference.

Section 2 - Membership

(6) The membership of the Subcommittee will consist of:

- a. the Chair, appointed by the Chair, Academic Senate (in consultation with the Academic Senate Standing Committee);
- b. the Deputy Chair, drawn from the membership and appointed by the Subcommittee;
- c. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Research (ex-officio);
- d. the Associate Deans, Research Training and Performance from each Faculty (ex-officio); and
- e. a member nominated by the Faculty Board of each Faculty who is an active HDR supervisor, appointed by Chair, Academic Senate (in consultation with the Academic Senate Standing Committee).

(7) The Chair of the Subcommittee may co-opt up three (3) appropriately skilled individuals to the membership of the Subcommittee for a specified term not exceeding two (2) years.

(8) The Chair may invite individuals with specialist knowledge and expertise to attend Subcommittee meetings as observers with right of audience and debate.

Term of Office

(9) The term of office for members appointed under clauses 6 (a), (b), and (e) will be two years.

Casual Vacancies

(10) Where a casual vacancy occurs during the term of membership of an appointed member under clauses 6 (a), (b), and (e), a new nomination will be sought from the relevant Faculty Board, for appointment by the Chair, Academic Senate (in consultation with Academic Senate Standing Committee).

Section 3 - Functions and Responsibilities

Committee responsibilities

(11) The Subcommittee will advise the Research and Research Training Committee of the Academic Senate on:

- a. policies and procedures governing GR examinations and their effectiveness;
- b. the University's rules regarding the examination of GR theses;
- c. identification of the need for new, and review of existing, University policies governing graduate research assessment and examinations and advise on required action(s) and / or content amendments;
- d. the monitoring of academic progress requirements and assessment for graduate research degrees; and
- e. the monitoring of the quality of graduate research assessment and examinations, training, including performance against institutional benchmarks.

(12) The Subcommittee will undertake the following in relation to graduate research (PhD, MPhil, MRes) thesis preparation, submission, and examination:

- a. approve the nomination and appointment of examiners for HDR thesis examinations and report such appointments to the Research and Research Training Committee;
- b. receive and evaluate examiners and supervisory panel reports and where necessary, approve correction reports; and
- c. recommend that the requirements for a graduate research degree have been met to the Research and Research Training Committee for approval.

(13) The Subcommittee will make recommendations on the award of the Vice-Chancellor's Commendation for GR theses to the Research and Research Training Committee for approval.

(14) The Subcommittee will receive advice from the faculties of the recipients of the award of the Executive Dean's Commendation for Academic Excellence in Year 2 Master of Research.

(15) The Subcommittee may receive disputes or unforeseen events arising from the thesis preparation, submission and examination process and will refer these as appropriate, with notification to Research and Research Training Committee.

Section 4 - Meetings

Frequency

(16) The Subcommittee shall meet at least ten times in each year and whenever summoned by the Chair.

Quorum

(17) A quorum for a meeting of the Subcommittee shall be a majority of the membership, i.e., half of the entire membership plus one, other than those members absent on approved leave.

Agendas and Minutes

(18) The Subcommittee will be supported by staff within the Graduation Research, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) portfolio, in accordance with the University's standard committee servicing protocols.

Conflicts of Interest

(19) Where a member has an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, they must declare this prior to discussion of the item of business.

Section 5 - Variations

(20) Variations to the terms of reference of the Subcommittee will be approved by the Academic Senate (if deemed appropriate) following recommendation by Research and Research Training Committee.

Section 6 - Definitions

(21) For the purpose of this document:

- a. Subcommittee - means the Research Degree Subcommittee of the Research and Research Training Committee.
- b. Faculty - a reference to the term "Faculty/Faculties" includes the Macquarie Business School.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Jacqueline Phillips Chair, Academic Senate +61 2 9850 2753
Responsible Officer	Megan Kemmis Manager, Governance Secretariat +61 2 9850 7316
Enquiries Contact	Megan Kemmis Manager, Governance Secretariat +61 2 9850 7316