

UNIVERSITY HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY	Council
PARENT BODY	Research Committee
SUBCOMMITTEES	HDR Scholarships Committee
RELATED	Nil
COMMITTEE(S)	
REPORTING	Research Committee
OPERATION	Ongoing
LAST REVIEWED	8 April 2026
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Senior Governance Officer (Academic Senate) Contact: academic.senate@flinders.edu.au
PURPOSE	The University Higher Degrees by Research Committee oversees the quality and compliance of higher degree by research (HDR) education and training.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Committee will monitor and report on:
 - HDR student recruitment, induction, progress, participation, completions and overall growth for all HDR students, and
 - the compliance of eligibility criteria for selected HDR awards, prizes and scholarships and provide advice on other HDR awards of recognition.
2. The Committee will determine:
 - outcomes of Higher Degree by Research examination cases where examiners are divergent, and
 - outcomes for awarding Higher Doctorates.
3. The Committee will oversee the University's HDR policies, admissions and examinations.
4. The Committee will advise on the internal monitoring and approval of HDR coursework.
5. In undertaking its role, the Committee will:
 - monitor, report, and escalate material risks in relation to HDR quality and training to the Research Committee
 - receive and consider reports from the HDR Scholarship Committee, and
 - where needed, establish working parties to advise it on any matters within this Terms of Reference.

QUORUM

6. Quorum is half of the full membership plus one (1) ignoring any fraction.

PROCEDURES

7. The Agenda will be set two (2) weeks in advance of the Committee meeting, by the Chair, the HDR Quality Assurance and Operations Manager and the Executive Officer. Items for discussion may be submitted to the Executive Officer.
8. Papers are due to be submitted to the Executive Officer eight (8) days prior to the meeting.
9. Papers will be circulated to members one (1) week prior to the meeting, and late papers at least two (2) days prior.
10. Apologies must be tendered in writing to the Executive Officer as soon as practicable.
11. Meetings are hosted on a monthly basis alternating in person and online.
12. Meetings of the Committee are closed to non-members, except by special invitation from the Chair.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

13. The Committee will meet monthly from February each year, with additional meetings upon the Chair's approval.
14. A special meeting will be additionally scheduled where the Committee meets as the Selection Committee for the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence and the HDR Student Research Impact Prize pursuant to University policy.
15. Urgent matters which fall outside of the agreed meeting cycle, and which are provided in writing to the Executive Officer, may, with the permission of the Chair, be referred for out of session consideration via email. A quorate response must be received from the membership in addition to a majority vote for the matter to be determined.

REVIEW

16. The Committee will report to the next available Research Committee meeting regarding key items addressed.
17. The Committee will review its terms of reference and operation annually and submit a report to the Research Committee with an assurance that it has discharged its delegated powers under this Terms of Reference.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

18. The Committee will consist of eight (8) *ex-officio* members described in paragraph 23 below, and two (2) appointed HDR student members and two (2) appointed HDR student alternate members described in paragraph 24 below.
19. Members are expected to:
 - a. act in the interests of the University as a whole;
 - b. contribute the time needed to understand the papers provided;
 - c. apply good analytical skills, objectivity and judgment; and
 - d. actively contribute to discussion during the meetings.
20. The Chair will arrange an induction for Committee members.
21. The Chair will provide ongoing mentoring and support for student members.
22. Proxies for *ex officio* members are allowed with the Chair's prior approval. However, unless they are formally acting in the *ex-officio* role, they will not have voting rights.

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

23. The following persons shall be *ex-officio* members of the Committee:
 - a. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research
 - b. Deputy Dean of Graduate Research
 - c. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) or delegate
 - d. HDR Coordinator from each College.

APPOINTED MEMBERS AND ALTERNATE MEMBERS

24. Two (2) HDR student members and two (2) HDR student alternate members will be appointed by the Committee, following a call for nominations to the entire HDR student body, with consideration being given to the diversity of nominees and the Colleges which host them.
25. The appointed student members and alternate members will serve a term of one (1) year from 1 April to 31 March.
26. An HDR student alternate member may attend committee meetings as an observer but may at the discretion of the Chair attend and vote in place of an HDR student member where that student member is an apology.

OBSERVERS

27. The following persons will ordinarily be observers for the Committee who provide subject matter expertise upon request but who do not have voting rights:
- a. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
 - b. Chief Research Development Officer
 - c. Research Lead, Indigenous Research Strategy
 - d. Executive Director, International Research Strategy
 - e. HDR Quality Assurance and Operations Manager
 - f. HDR Candidature Coordinator (Examinations)
 - g. IDS Research Data and Analytics Business Partner
 - h. Operations Lead, Scholarships Services, Student Finance
 - i. Two (2) HDR Student Alternate Members.

CHAIR

28. The Chair will be the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research.
29. In the event of their absence or a conflict of interest regarding specific items, the Deputy Dean of Graduate Research will assume responsibility for managing the meeting or the individual item(s) as appropriate.

DOCUMENT CONTROL	DATE	RATIONALE
v 1	13/11/24	Approved by the Academic Senate at meeting 5/24.
v 2	08/04/26	Updates to clauses 18 and 27 approved by the Research Committee at meeting 1/26.