



University Research Committee Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

The University Research Committee (URC) shall:

- Develop, monitor and review policies relating to the University's research activities, including research and research training, internationalisation and international reputation, and their management.
- Guide, monitor, review and endorse the activities of its sub-committees (i.e., the University Research Standing Committee, the Thesis Examination Committee, the University Ethics Policy Committee and Faculty Research Committees).
- Guide the development of the University's strategic research priorities and objectives and monitor research performance within the framework of the University's Strategic Planning process.
- Review, on a triennial basis, submissions for formation and/or continuation of University Research Strengths and advise on funding allocations to, and the status of, all URC-funded research groups.
- Provide leadership and advice on mechanisms to improve monitoring, benchmarking and reporting of the University's research performance.
- Hold one to two events annually to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information concerning research and research training issues for the broader research community
- Inform and advise the Academic Senate on research and research training matters as they arise.

URC Membership

Roles and Responsibilities of members

The University Research Committee oversees research and research training at the University of Wollongong via strategic policy and management decisions taken within the URC and through the activities of its sub-committees and ensuring appropriate interaction on research issues, as well as the dissemination of information and advice to the Academic Senate. The URC shall establish working parties for specific projects. Appointees to working parties do not need to be members of the URC. These Working Parties shall report to the URC.

The URC shall consist of:

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
- The Dean of Research (Deputy Chair)
- The Chair, Academic Senate (or delegate)
- The Deans of each Faculty (or delegate)
- Four Research Strength Directors invited by the DVC(R)
- Up to two additional members invited by the DVC(R)

The DVC(R) will appoint members to the URC for a term of two years.

Executive Secretary, Director, Research Services Office
Minutes Secretary, Office Assistant, Research Services Office

Meetings

The URC will meet at least four times per year.

Quorum

The Committee shall have a quorum which is equal to one half or, where one half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher to one half of the total number of members of the Committee.

Both genders are to be represented on the URC and all URC sub-committees, and if necessary additional members will be coopted to meet this requirement.

The Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Dean of Research are *ex-officio* members of all URC Committees.

Relationship of URC and its sub-committees to Other University Committees, research roles and functions at UOW

The URC is a committee of Senate. The URC has at least three points of contact with Faculty Executives (*i.e.* Deans, Associate Deans (Research)/Faculty Research Chairs and Directors of URC Research Strengths). Management of research at the University requires cooperation and communication between all these parties and the URC.

The URC and its sub-committees complement and support the following roles and functions responsible for managing or running the various research activities of the University:

- The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
- The Dean of Research
- Research & Innovation Division (RAID)
- Faculty Research Committees
- URC Research Strengths

URC Sub-committees

University Research Standing Committee (URSC)

Terms of Reference

In concert with and in response to advice from the URC, the URSC shall:

- develop, implement, monitor and review policies, guidelines and procedures for establishing, servicing and strengthening the University's key research objectives and advise faculties on developing and maintaining research performance through the faculty planning process.
- Advise the URC in the development of policies and guidelines for the allocation of URC funds.
- Allocate research grants and research-related funds (including, but not limited to, competitive URC grant schemes, ARC funds devolved to the University for competitive allocation, equipment funds and annual block allocations to research units) within the context of policies determined by the URC.
- Develop, implement and monitor the processes for allocation of APA and UPA scholarships in concert with the Director of the Research Student Centre.
- Review annual reports of research units and of progress/final reports for competitive URC schemes, devolved ARC schemes and equipment funds).
- Review outcomes of URC funding schemes and performance-based allocations to research units and consequently to provide recommendations to the URC when a need for substantial changes in policy or procedures is indicated.

Determinations made by the URSC are final and referred to the URC for information only, not review.

URSC Membership

Roles and responsibilities of members

Members are expected to report back on URSC business to their constituents (in faculties, research units, other committees), as well as participating in Committee discussions and decision making.

The URSC shall consist of:

- The Dean of Research (Chair)
- The Deputy Chair (appointed by the Chair for a term of two years)
- The Chairs of each Faculty Research Committee

Executive Secretary, Grants Manager, Research Services Office

Minutes Secretary, Grants Assistant, Research Services Office

Some members may be coopted to the Committee in an advisory capacity on the basis of their expertise in particular areas. The URSC shall establish working parties for specific projects. Appointees to working parties do not need to be members of the URSC. These Working Parties shall report to the URSC.

The Dean of Research will appoint members to the URSC for a term of two years.

Meetings

The Committee shall meet every six weeks, with additional meetings as necessary.

Quorum

The Committee shall have a quorum which is equal to one half or, where one half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher to one half of the total number of members of the Committee.

Thesis Examination Committee (TEC)

Terms of Reference

The TEC shall:

- Oversee the processes and policies governing UOW higher degree research thesis examination.
- Consider reports from examiners of Doctoral by Research and Masters by Research theses and determine a resolution based on those reports and the report from the Head of Postgraduate Studies;
- Consider applications from candidates to transfer from Masters by Research degrees to Doctoral by Research degrees;
- Monitor the thesis examination progress of all candidates and take appropriate action where unreasonable delays are encountered;
- Ratify all “straightforward matters” accepted by two TEC representatives, one being the Chair or deputy;
- Advise the Dean of Research on all formal thesis examination appeals (as per s. 10 of the Code of Practice – Supervision); and
- Respond to any miscellaneous matters relating to thesis examination.
- Liaise with the Director of the Research Student Centre to ensure thesis examination practices and policies are appropriately managed and promoted across the university

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

Members are expected to report back on TEC business to their constituents (in faculties, research units, other committees), as well as participating in Committee discussions and decision making.

The TEC shall consist of:

- A senior academic nominated by the Dean of Research (Chair)
- An academic staff member from each of the nine faculties. The Dean of Research must approve faculty nominations to this committee.

Some members may be coopted to the Committee in an advisory capacity on the basis of their expertise in particular areas. The TEC shall establish working parties for specific projects. Appointees to working parties do not need to be members of the TEC. These Working Parties shall report to the TEC.

The Dean of Research will appoint members to the TEC for a term of two years.

Executive Secretary, Director, Research Student Centre
Minutes Secretary, Thesis Officer, Research Student Centre

Meetings

The TEC meets at least 12 times per year.

Quorum

The Committee shall have a quorum which is equal to one half or, where one half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher to one half of the total number of members of the Committee.

The University Ethics Policy Committee (UEPC)

Terms of Reference

The UEPC shall advise the URC on policies and procedures in relation to:

- The *Human Research Ethics Committees*, in accordance with its functions as defined in the National Statement on Human Research Involving Humans (1999); the University of Wollongong Code of Practice-Research, State and Commonwealth legislation, and other relevant policies and regulations.
- The *Animal Ethics Committee*, in accordance with its functions as defined in the NHMRC Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Research (7th edition, 2004), the NSW Animal Research Act (1985), the NSW Animal Research Regulation (2005), the University of Wollongong Code of Practice-Research, and other relevant policies and regulations.
- The *Gene Technology Review Committee*, in accordance with its statutory and regulatory functions as identified in relevant Commonwealth and State legislation, the University of Wollongong Code of Practice-Research, and other relevant policies and regulations.

The UEPC gives coherence to the work of these three separate committees, to effect cross-linkages between them, and to serve as an advisory body on research-related ethical matters to other operational committees and to the URC.

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

The UEPC shall consist of:

- The Chair (appointed by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research))
- The Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Health & Medical)
- The Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Humanities, Social Science & Behavioural)
- The Chair, Animal Ethics Committee
- The Chair, Gene Technology Review Committee
- Two academic members with relevant expertise nominated by the DVC(R)
- The Ethics Manager, Research Services Office

Some members may be co-opted to the Committee in an advisory capacity on the basis of their expertise in particular areas. The UEPC shall establish working parties for specific projects. Appointees to working parties do not need to be members of the UEPC. These Working Parties shall report to the UEPC.

The DVC(R) will appoint members to the UEPC for a term of two years.

Minutes Secretary, Ethics Assistant, Research Services Office

Meetings

The UEPC meets at least four times per year.

Quorum

The Committee shall have a quorum which is equal to one half or, where one half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher to one half of the total number of members of the Committee.

Faculty Research Committees (FRCs)

Terms of Reference

FRCs play a key role in research management at the university, and shall:

- Serve as the primary link between the URC and its sub-committees and the research and research training activities within the faculties.
- Interpret, disseminate and implement URC policies and procedures concerning research and HDR supervision and the selection mechanisms for URC research and research training awards to members of the faculty.
- Act within faculties to promote and develop research excellence.
- Ensure that mechanisms for the support, mentoring and funding of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are established (via the URC Faculty Research Grant and/or Research Strength support).
- Recommend ranking of faculty candidates for URC research and research training awards.
- Review and implement the Faculty Research Plan.
- Further the promotion and development of research activities and research excellence within the faculty.
- Serve as a forum for the discussion of ideas, issues and opportunities that concern research within the faculty.
- Have carriage of Faculty-based research initiatives.

The FRC is responsible for the broad oversight of matters concerning HDR students and ensuring that Faculty arrangements for HDR student supervision meet UOW Code of Practice, Supervision requirements. The FRC, through the Faculty Research Grant and/or URC Research Strength support, ensures the provision of research funds and adequate infrastructure for HDR students. The FRC must report annually in the Faculty Research Report to the URC on HDR support.

FRC Chairs and Committees are encouraged to expand their promotion of research excellence and management of research and HDR students within their faculty. Such activities should be identified and reported in the Faculty Research Plan. Faculties can request URC funding in the Faculty Research Grant application to partially support innovative activities (e.g. grant editing, mentoring and support for ECRs, research performance awards, and faculty research grant schemes).

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

FRC membership should include:

- FRC Chair (appointed by Dean of Faculty, in consultation with DVC(R))
- Deputy Chair
- Dean of Faculty (*ex officio*)
- Research Strength Director(s) and/or Research Unit Leader(s)
- Heads of Schools/Departments and/or Postgraduate Coordinators or HPS
- HDR student representative (excluding staff who are also HDR students)
- Members of URC Committees

Other key members of RAID (eg, Directors, Managers of Innovation and Commercialisation) may be invited to attend to discuss or clarify specific issues.

FRC membership will vary with each faculty, but should reflect the scope of research activities within the faculty, including representation of research strengths, as well as faculty strategic research areas. Further, because the FRC has carriage of policies and procedures supporting HDR students enrolled in the faculty, the committee should include appropriate representation of Postgraduate Coordinators (or Heads of Postgraduate Studies (HPS)) across the academic units within the faculty and the faculty's representative to the TEC.

It is not required that each of the above roles be filled by separate individuals; some individuals may fulfil more than one role (e.g. department heads may be the unit HPS, an Ethics Committee member may also be a Postgraduate Coordinator). With the exception of the HDR student representative, all FRC members should hold academic or research positions at the university.

Roles of the FRC Chair

The **primary URSC role** of the FRC Chair is to provide the link between faculty's research interests and URSC business. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Development of research policy and procedures
- Providing faculty input in the selection of URSC research and research training awards
- Providing faculty feedback on URSC research issues
- Advising the DVC(R) and Dean of Research on faculty research issues, and
- Discussing issues concerning research practice and management at university level.

As a member of URSC in matters of ranking and allocation of scholarships and grants, the FRC Chair must act in accord with the best interest of the University as a whole, not solely as an advocate for the Faculty. To accomplish these ends, the FRC Chair attends URSC meetings, informal meetings (e.g. FRC Chairs' breakfast) and contributes to Working Parties as necessary.

At the **faculty level**, the FRC Chair is responsible for:

- Interpreting and disseminating information from RAID and URSC policies and procedures and should lead in their faculty-based implementation.
- Setting agendas and holding regular meetings of the FRC to advance both URC and Faculty research management.

- Play a central role in producing the Faculty Research Plan (with the Dean and key researchers in the faculty) and be proactive in its implementation and in monitoring its outcomes through the FRC.
- Reporting to the URSC on research activity within the faculty and the use of the URC component of the Faculty research budget.

Appeals

URSC Decisions

Individuals have the right to appeal the outcomes of URSC decisions on the basis of failure to follow due process. Should any individual wish to appeal the outcome of any URSC decision they must notify the Director, Research Services Office in writing of their intention to appeal within 14 days of the receipt of the advice of the decision.

The Director, Research Services Office will refer the matter to the DVC(R) for consideration. If the DVC(R) determines there are grounds for appeal then s/he will convene a meeting of a URC Appeals Committee.

A URC Appeals Committee will comprise:

- The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
- The Dean of the relevant Faculty
- A senior academic who is a member of Senate but not a member of the relevant Faculty, nominated by the Chair of Academic Senate.

Any individual who has concerns about the *academic* merit of an adverse decision of the URSC should discuss the matter with the Chair of the relevant FRC in the first instance.

Other URC sub-committees

Procedures for appeals in relation to other committees are set out in the terms of reference of individual ethics committees, Academic Grievance Procedures (HDR Students) and Appeals Policy for HDR Thesis examination outcomes.