'University Research Committee' - Membership and Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Establishment

Background

(1) Charles Sturt University (the University) is required to exercise academic governance oversight of its research and research training activities, through the Academic Senate and its sub-committees. The University Research Committee is established by Academic Senate, with duties and responsibilities that apply to all matters associated with strategic initiatives and academic governance issues pertaining to the quality of research and research training activities.

Purpose

(2) The University Research Committee shall undertake the duties listed under Section 4, to ensure the academic governance oversight of the research and research training activities of the University.

(3) In particular, the University Research Committee will:

a. advise the Academic Senate on issues of policy and research innovation; and
b. provide strategic leadership in research and research training matters.

Section 2 - Glossary

(4) For the purpose of this document:

a. Committee – means the University Research Committee.
b. Higher Degree by Research – means a masters or doctorate course of which at least 66% is research.

Section 3 - Membership

(5) The membership of the committee is set out below:

a. Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research).
b. Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance) (Chair).
c. Chair, Academic Senate, or nominee.
d. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement) (ex officio).
e. Associate Dean, Research of each faculty.
f. Director of Research Services
g. Dean, Graduate Research.
h. University Librarian or nominee.
i. University Research Institute Directors.

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j. Six research-active academic staff, nominated by the Academic Senate and ensuring that representation is not from a single faculty or a single research discipline, and a minimum of one in each of the following categories:
    i. Level E
    ii. Level C or D
    iii. Level A or B
k. One elected member of Academic Senate nominated by Academic Senate.
l. Two higher degree by research students, nominated by the Student Senate.
m. Two Heads of Schools, nominated by the Heads of School Forum, not within the same faculty.
n. One member, nominated by the Academic Senate, with experience and expertise in First Nations-focused research.

(6) The members appointed by the Academic Senate, the Student Senate, and the Heads of School Forum will have terms of office for two years.

(7) Where there is a casual vacancy, the relevant body will nominate a replacement member.

(8) A person who fills a casual vacancy holds office as a member for the rest of the term of the person's predecessor in office.

(9) The Chair may grant to any staff member of the University the right of audience and debate for a specified period of time.

Section 4 - Functions and responsibilities

Committee responsibilities

(10) The University Research Committee will:

a. identify and oversee the quality of research and research training, including associated risks and solutions;
b. receive reports on and consider the quality and effectiveness of research projects, research outputs, and research innovations;
c. oversee development and implementation of the framework to ensure quality in research courses and subjects;
d. monitor compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, and receive and consider reports on this relevant to the committee and ensure appropriate actions where required;
e. receive and review annual reports of higher degree by research course performance which will include, at a minimum, attrition, progression and completion, and student feedback by cohort, including external benchmarking;
f. oversee the schedule of course reviews for higher degree by research courses and receive and review course review reports;
g. undertake critical scrutiny of higher degree by research course proposals, as defined in the Course and Subject Policy, and make recommendations to the Academic Senate for approval as appropriate;
h. oversee relevant policies and procedures and make recommendations to the Academic Senate or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) in accordance with the Delegation Schedule A - Governance and Legal, including but not limited to policies and procedures for:
    i. research integrity and research misconduct;
    ii. higher degree by research admission, candidature, and examination; and
    iii. higher degree by research training and supervision;
i. oversee delegations related to admission, enrolment, leave of absence and higher degree by research courses

(in the Delegation Schedule E - Academic);

j. receive and consider matters involving honours courses and students in a coursework degree with a research component referred by the University Courses Committee or the faculties;
k. receive and consider reports on research integrity and research misconduct including allegations of misconduct;
l. receive and consider reports from the Research Institutes, the Higher Degree by Research Committee and Faculty Research Committees:
    i. confirming that relevant policy/procedure requirements have been met, especially in relation to the authority to approval final grades for subjects;
    ii. addressing Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF) responsibilities as relevant to Higher Degree by Research students, including but not limited to orientation and progress, learning environment facilities and infrastructure, diversity and equity, learning resources and educational support, and academic integrity; and
    iii. identifying and responding to existing or emerging issues/risks and solutions;
m. receive and consider advice from, and inform, Faculty Boards on research and research training, policies and procedures; and
n. monitor the effectiveness of the committee through regular self-assessments.

(11) The committee will provide an annual assurance statement to the Academic Senate on the matters within the scope of its responsibility.

Advisory role and referral of matters

(12) The University Research Committee will advise the Academic Senate on all matters relating to research performance and the academic governance of research training activities of the University.

(13) The University Research Committee may refer any item to the University Courses Committee and/or the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for discussion, consideration and/or action, and may refer relevant matters for action or noting to other committees or officers as appropriate.

Section 5 - Meetings

Quorum

(14) A quorum for a meeting of the committee will be a majority of the membership, i.e., half of the entire membership, plus one. Vacant positions are counted when calculating a quorum.

Meetings

(15) Meetings will be published by the Office of Governance and Corporate Administration in an annual schedule of meetings, approved by the Academic Senate. Meetings will be open-audience and staff are welcome and encouraged to attend but are expected to notify the Chair to ensure appropriate rooms are available.

Agendas and minutes

(16) Agendas and minutes for the meetings of the committee will be prepared by the Office of Governance and Corporate Administration.

Conflicts of interest

(17) Where a member has a perceived or material conflict of interest, they must declare this to the Chair and at the committee meeting before the item of business is discussed.

Variations

(18) Variations to the terms of reference and/or membership of the committee must be approved by the Academic Senate.

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Unit Head	Anthony Heywood University Secretary
Author	Mark Smith Director, Governance
Enquiries Contact	Office of Governance and Corporate Administration +61 2 63384207

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