

LASE Research Degrees Committee Terms of Reference

1. Constitution

- 1.1 The Research Degrees Committee (RDC) is a committee of the Academic Board, operating under delegated authority.
- 1.2 The Research Degrees Committee reports to the Research and Innovation Board (RIB). The Research Degrees Committee has the following sub-committees: College Postgraduate Research Experience Committees in each College, which oversee research degree examination arrangements, the training of postgraduate research students and the quality of supervision of postgraduate researchers within the College and recommend the conferral of research degree awards.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Research Degrees Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of the University Group's Research and Innovation Strategy as it relates to postgraduate research. It oversees regulations, codes of practice and policies relating to postgraduate research, recommending changes to Research and Innovation Board, and is responsible and for ensuring the quality and standards of all research degree programmes. It confers and ratifies awards and is responsible for overseeing the consistent delivery of an excellent postgraduate research experience which meets the academic, social, welfare and professional development needs of postgraduate students.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The membership of the Research Degrees Committee shall comprise:

Ex officio

- Group Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Chair)
- Group Director of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation (Vice Chair)
- Head of Greenwich Doctoral College
- Director of the Kent Graduate and Researcher College
- 2 x Faculty Heads of Postgraduate Research (Greenwich) (interim basis until Colleges are established)
- 4 x Directors of Graduate Research Studies (Kent) (interim basis until Colleges are established)

Other Members

- 2 x LASE Students' Union representatives (one from the Greenwich and one from the Kent academic divisions).
 - 2 x Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) representatives (one from the Greenwich and one from the Kent academic divisions) appointed by the Chair for a term of one year, which may be renewed.
- 3.2 Faculty Heads of Postgraduate Research (Greenwich) and Directors of Graduate Research Studies (Kent) are appointed by the chair normally for a term of one year in rotation with others in the same role.

3.3 For the Research Degrees Committee, the quorum is one third of the membership.

4. Attendance at meetings

4.1 Other staff may be invited to attend for specific items where their attendance can inform and support the Committee.

5. Frequency and format of meetings

5.1 The Research Degrees Committee will meet a minimum of four times per academic year.

5.2 Meetings will be held either in-person, via electronic means (e.g. online) or via a hybrid format, subject to agreement by the Chair. The Committee may also decide matters by email circulation. In between meetings, the Committee is empowered to decide matters falling within the Committee's remit by chair's action; matters decided by chairs action shall be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

6. Delegated authority

Under the Academic Board's Delegation Framework, the Research Degrees Committee is authorised by the Academic Board to approve:

6.1 **Higher Doctorates:** upon recommendation from the Higher Doctorate Panel, approve applications and proposed external examiners for Higher Doctorates; approve recommendations of external examiners and confer awards for Higher Doctorates (Students' Union and PGR members will not be present for these discussions);

6.2 **Ratify postgraduate awards (other than Higher Doctorates):** ratify recommendations for postgraduate awards recommended by Faculty PGR Experience Committees (Students' Union and PGR members will not be present for these discussions);

6.3 **Strategy implementation:** plans for implementing the Group's Research and Innovation strategy as related to postgraduate research, including the approval and closure of projects;

6.4 **Research degree quality:** plans to improve the quality and standards of research degree provision;

6.5 **Research student surveys:** direct all arrangements for research student surveys and the consideration of data with regards the PGR experience as and when appropriate;

7. Other duties

The other duties of the Committee shall be to:

- 7.1 **Strategy:** advise RIB on the University Group's Research and Innovation Strategy as it relates relation to postgraduate research and identify new areas for postgraduate researcher development;
- 7.2 **Regulations and policies:** oversee academic regulations, policies and codes of practice relating to research degree provision and recommend changes to RIB;
- 7.3 **Embed positive research culture:** oversee a supportive and inclusive research and knowledge exchange culture amongst postgraduate researchers that embeds the Group's values and monitor the development of this research culture;
- 7.4 **Research environment:** keep the quality of the research environment for postgraduate research students under review;
- 7.5 **Quality and standards:** oversee the approval, monitoring and administration of research degrees, ensuring consistent quality and standards across all Faculties and compliance with academic quality assurance requirements;
- 7.6 **Research degree supervision and training:** oversee research degree student supervision, training and career development;
- 7.7 **Awards:** oversee research degree student performance and awards;
- 7.8 **Collaboration with external research agencies:** oversee collaborations with Research Councils and other external agencies in relation to postgraduate research matters;
- 7.9 **Horizon scanning:** regularly scan the Higher Education sector and other organisations for best postgraduate research practice and innovation and support implementation at LASE;
- 7.10 **Faculty PGR Experience Committees:** monitor the operation and decisions of the Faculty PGR Experience Committees and consider any recommendations from them; make recommendations to RIB in respect of the terms of reference and membership of Faculty PGR Experience Committees;
- 7.11 **Freedom of speech and academic freedom:** have particular regard to the importance of freedom of speech and academic freedom in the Committee's business, in accordance with the commitments in the Group's Freedom of Speech Code(s) of Practice;
- 7.12 **EDI:** ensure active consideration of equality, diversity, inclusion and sustainability in the conduct of the Committee's business.

8. Reporting Procedures

- 8.1 The Research Degrees Committee reports to the Research and Innovation Board as follows:

- **Frequently:** through summaries of the minutes of each meeting to the next meeting of the Research and Innovation Board. Additionally, the Committee Chair delivers an oral report (along with other committee chairs) as an item on the RIB meeting agenda;
- **Periodically:** via other policies, reports, plans and progress updates which it reviews and/or recommends for RIB approval within the business cycle and its terms of reference;
- **Ad hoc:** where urgent Group-wide matters require direct escalation to the RIB for decision or discussion.

9. Secretarial arrangements

- 9.1 The Committee will be clerked by the Group's University Secretary or their nominee.

10. Review

- 10.1 The Committee will review its own effectiveness annually and in greater depth at a minimum of every three years. Reviews may be performed as part of wider governance effectiveness review.
- 10.2 These terms of reference will be reviewed annually to ensure their effectiveness and any amendments recommended to the Academic Board for approval.

Approved by Academic Board: 7 October 2026

Date of next review: October 2027

Document owner: Group University Secretary