

**Monash University Graduate Research Committee
Terms of Reference
March 2022**

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1. Preamble

- 1.1. The Graduate Research Committee (GRC) is constituted under Part 4 of the Monash University (Vice-Chancellor) Regulations.
- 1.2. These Terms of Reference (ToR):
 - (a) are a non-legislative set of guidelines adopted by the GRC to assist members to implement the functions of the Graduate Research Committee as specified under Part 4 of the Regulations, in part, paraphrasing, elaborating or interpreting these functions where appropriate.
 - (b) set out the responsibilities of the GRC and outline how the GRC ensures effective governance practices are in place to discharge those responsibilities in relation to graduate research matters.
 - (c) will be reviewed and updated where required on an annual basis.

2. GRC operational and quality assurance responsibilities

- 2.1. Under the general supervision of the Academic Board, GRC has responsibility for:
 - (a) the academic content of, and assessment of, graduate research degrees;
 - (b) admission to, administration of and exclusion from, graduate research degrees;

- (c) the administration of centrally funded graduate research scholarships;
- (d) any other graduate research matters over which it has been granted authority, including intellectual property and student discipline matters, as well as responsibilities afforded it under the Monash University (Council) Regulations; other parts of the Monash University (Vice-Chancellor) Regulations; and the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations.

3. GRC strategic priorities

3.1. The GRC has responsibility for:

- (a) developing University-wide training programs relevant to graduate research students.
- (b) training graduate research student supervisors.
- (c) supporting the University's strategic agenda, in particular its commitment to inclusiveness and the admission of talented students, irrespective of social or economic circumstances.
- (d) approving graduate research procedures and endorsing graduate research policies.

4. Meetings

- 4.1. One half of the members present at a meeting constitutes a quorum.
- 4.2. The chair presides over meetings of the GRC.
- 4.3. If the chair is absent or unable to discharge the duties of their office, the deputy chair presides.
- 4.4. All matters requiring a decision which come before any meeting of the GRC must be decided by a simple majority decision of the members present.
- 4.5. The person presiding at a meeting of the GRC has a vote and, in the event of the votes on any question being equal, a casting vote.
- 4.6. The chair or deputy chair must, as soon as possible after each meeting of the Committee:
 - (a) report to the Vice-Chancellor on:
 - (i) the conduct, status and progress of any matters referred to the GRC by the Vice-Chancellor; and
 - (ii) any matter on which the Vice-Chancellor requests the GRC to report to them; and
 - (iii) any other matter that the GRC agrees should be reported to them; and

- (b) report to the Academic Board on:
 - (i) the conduct, status and progress of any matters referred to the GRC by the Academic Board; and
 - (ii) any matter on which the Academic Board requests the GRC to report to it; and
 - (iii) any other matter that the GRC agrees should be reported to it.

5. Subcommittees

- 5.1. A member of the GRC may be appointed a member of a subcommittee, but a subcommittee may be comprised entirely of persons who are not GRC members.
- 5.2. The Monash University (Vice-Chancellor) Regulations state that the "Graduate Research Committee, by resolution, must constitute and appoint a subcommittee to be known as the Steering Committee and may constitute and appoint any other subcommittees as it thinks fit".
- 5.3. The GRC, by resolution, may delegate to a subcommittee or a member of a subcommittee all or any of its functions, powers or duties other than a power or function of the Council delegated to it by the Council.
- 5.4. The GRC has established and delegated some of its functions to the following subcommittees:
 - (a) GRC Steering Committee;
 - (b) GRC Scholarship Selection Subcommittee.
- 5.5. Each subcommittee has its own Terms of Reference reviewed and approved by GRC on annual basis.

6. Membership of the Graduate Research Committee

- 6.1. The GRC consists of:
 - (a) a chair of the GRC nominated by the senior officer responsible for research within the University; and
 - (b) a deputy chair of the GRC nominated by the senior officer responsible for research within the University; and
 - (c) a representative of the Academic Board nominated by the president of the Academic Board; and
 - (d) a representative of each faculty nominated by the dean of the faculty; and
 - (e) a single representative of any entities that are not faculties or units of faculties in which students are enrolled for a higher degree by research, nominated by the chair of the GRC; and

- (f) 2 representatives of the Monash Graduate Association Inc. nominated by the executive committee of the Association; and
- (g) the convenor of the GRC steering committee.

7. Terms of office, co-opting of members and alternates

- 7.1. The term of office of a member is one year for a member nominated by the Monash Graduate Association Incorporated, and 2 years for all other members. A member is eligible for re-nomination.
- 7.2. A casual vacancy in the office of a member nominated by the Monash Graduate Association Incorporated is to be filled for the balance of the term by a person nominated by the Monash Graduate Association Incorporated executive committee.
- 7.3. The GRC may co-opt any person to be a member of the GRC to assist it in carrying out its functions, for a definite or indefinite period of time.
- 7.4. The GRC may at any time remove a co-opted member from office.
- 7.5. Where a GRC member cannot attend a GRC meeting, they may nominate an alternate to attend in their place, subject to their alternate having been nominated in accordance with the approvals described in 6.1 (above).
- 7.6. An alternate member has all the functions and powers of the GRC member for whom they are acting, and may perform all the duties of that member.

8. Role of the Chair

- 8.1. The Chair has responsibility for leading the University Graduate Research/ Research Training strategic agenda and establishing the high-level objectives required for Faculties and Institutes with enrolling graduate research students, and is to deliver on the University's broader strategic agenda.
- 8.2. The Chair is responsible for approving the agenda for GRC meetings, ensuring it is consistent with the GRC's Terms of Reference and with GRC priorities.
- 8.3. The Chair has authority to call a special meeting of GRC on any notice for business which they wish to submit to GRC as a matter of urgency.
- 8.4. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that meetings are conducted in a professional manner, where all members are able to contribute as independent individuals; that decisions and recommended actions taken are clear at the meeting; and that the minutes are an accurate reflection of proceedings.
- 8.5. Where appropriate and where delegated the authority, the Chair may make determinations to facilitate business between meetings of GRC.
- 8.6. The Chair, in consultation with members of the Committee, may convene a topic focused Working Group to review, advise and make recommendations to the Committee for approval on matters relevant to it. Such matters may relate to

strategic, compliance or other graduate research related activities within the remit of the Committee.

- (a) Working Group membership will be nominated by the Chair and may include members of the Graduate Research Committee and non-members with subject matter expertise relevant to the working groups topic of focus;
- (b) When convening a working group, the Chair will set a clear objective, scope and timeframe within which the group is required to report back to the GRC.

8.7. The Chair will ensure that the performance of GRC is reviewed annually.

9. Duties of members

9.1. Members have:

- (a) A duty to ensure that they have read and understood all agendas, supporting documentation and papers forming the business of the GRC in advance of attendance at meetings. Particular attention being paid to items relating to a decision of the committee regardless of whether they are for approval, endorsement or noting;
- (b) a duty to be diligent in attending GRC meetings, to act with respect for other members and to act in the interests of the University as a whole and not to fetter their discretion by promoting the interests of particular groups;
- (c) a duty to avoid perceived, potential and actual conflicts of interest and an obligation to disclose a conflict of interest in matters considered by the GRC. If a member has any doubt, they should discuss the matter with the Chair;
- (d) an obligation to support the letter and spirit of GRC decisions; and
- (e) a duty not to make improper use of information obtained through their position as a GRC member.

10. Observers

10.1. In order to assist GRC with its deliberations, the GRC may co-opt any person to be an observer for a definite or indefinite period.

10.2. The GRC may remove a co-opted observer at any time.

10.3. In addition, staff and students of the University may request permission to be present as observers for consideration of a particular agenda item. Such requests are to be submitted to the Secretary to GRC at least 3 calendar days prior to the meeting. Attendance will be at the invitation of the Chair. Observers cannot move or second motions or vote.

11. Executive support

11.1. Secretariat support to the Chair and GRC is provided by Executive Services.

- 11.2. The Secretariat is responsible for preparing and circulating agendas, minutes, the action register, and distribution of out of session circulation resolutions.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1. The existence and details of any management information, data, materials, discussions and decisions that are not publicly released are confidential information of the GRC, and must not be disclosed to others (for example, to a third party) by members, attendees and observers of GRC unless authorised to do so by the Chair.
- 12.2. All confidential information acquired by a GRC member while performing their duties must be kept confidential.

13. Meetings

- 13.1. GRC meeting papers should be distributed to members at least seven calendar days prior to each meeting to enable members to read the papers and properly prepare for the meeting.
- 13.2. In general, there will be eight meetings per year, scheduled well in advance.
- 13.3. Special meetings of GRC may be convened. The Secretary must ensure that such meetings are called within fourteen calendar days of receipt of request from the members.
- 13.4. Members are welcome to contact the Chair directly or via the Secretary to request that items be added to the agenda. Such requests should be made no less than ten calendar days in advance of the meeting, except that GRC may, by majority vote, permit the introduction of any subject for discussion.
- 13.5. Should a matter arise between preparation of the agenda and the meeting date, the matter shall be presented to GRC at the Chair's discretion.

14. Out of session circulation of urgent items or resolutions

- 14.1. The Chair may approve that a matter is urgent and cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting of GRC. In such cases, documentation and a recommendation will be circulated via email to all members for consideration.
- 14.2. If a majority of members support the recommendation, it is deemed to have passed at a meeting of GRC.

Current Membership

Ex-Officio Membership

Chair: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training)

Deputy Chair: Academic Director (Graduate Research)

Director, Monash Graduate Research Office

Representative for the President of Academic Board

Members

Associate Deans Graduate Research Faculties of:

Art Design and Architecture

Arts

Business and Economics

Education

Engineering

Information Technology

Law

Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Science

Institutes (a nominee from MSDI or MUARC) – rostered half-year each as member or observer

Monash Graduate Association (2 student representatives (HASS and STEM))

Global Engagement

Observers

Faculty Graduate Research Managers' representative

Monash University Library

Monash University International campus representative

Monash Graduate Research Office

Monash Graduate Association (non-student member)

Institutes (1 nominee from the non-Member Institute)

References & Governance

Approval	Graduate Research Committee DATE: 28 January 2020 (Original) 24 March 2022 – GRC 2/2022 (Version 2)
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Content enquiries	gr-governance@monash.edu (for policy-related queries)

