UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

RESEARCH GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023/24

Conduct and Reporting of Meetings

The committee will normally conduct business by consensus but, where a vote needs to be taken and a tie occurs, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

Minutes of each meeting will be formally recorded and submitted to the committee before its next meeting. Minutes will not normally be published, but will be supplied to those with a legitimate interest, as determined by the committee in its sole discretion.

The terms of Reference of all Research Governance committees will be reviewed annually.

Declaration of Interest

When a committee member perceives a conflict of interest – for example, when they have a vested financial or personal interest in a research project or with a project sponsor; or direct involvement in the research project; or have had personal dealings with the individual being discussed – they shall declare this to the Chair. In these circumstances, one of the following decisions should be taken in consultation with the Chair (or their Deputy):

a) The member remains in the room for the committee discussion (but abstains from participating)
b) The member leaves the room for the duration of the discussion

If the person chairing a meeting perceives a conflict of interest, they shall invite another member to chair for that item and then act in the same way as above.

Co-opting Members

A committee may co-opt additional members as it sees fit. The appointment of such co-opted members is limited to specific purposes or projects, and their attendance at meetings ends on completion of that purpose or project.

If they are unable to attend then the Chair can deputise chairing the meeting to another Committee member. Co-opted members are not counted as part of the quorum.

Specialist Advice
The Chair may invite an individual to attend a particular meeting or meetings to give specialist advice to the committee. Such individuals however should not participate in the final decision-making of the committee.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

1. To formulate and advise on research strategy and policy throughout the University and assist, where appropriate, in the preparation of the submission for Research Excellence Framework (REF).

2. To stimulate research effort throughout the University and to provide the quality assurance and monitoring processes for ensuring high calibre research performance.

3. To seek and to stimulate research that underpins course development, impacts upon the curriculum, and leads to contractual arrangements with industry, commerce and the professions.

4. Through its own functions and those of its Sub-Committees, to ensure compliance with the Regulations of the University relating to the award of its research degrees.

5. To review and, where necessary, revise the regulations for the award of the University's research degrees.

6. To have the following powers, relating to the examination and assessment for and conferment of degrees, to act on behalf of the University:

    i. to oversee the approval of the appointment of internal and external examiners for research degrees;
    ii. to make decisions, based upon consideration of the reports and recommendations of the examiners, with regard to the conferment of a Research Degree;

7. To scrutinise, via a purposely appointed Sub-Committee of experienced researchers, applications for the award of Higher Doctorates and to administer procedures for the examination and conferment of such degrees.

Monitoring of University-level Risk
The University is committed to implementing a risk management framework, to enable an appropriate and proportionate level of risk management across the University and to ensure that the key risk related issues are addressed in a timely fashion.

The objectives are to:
- Continuously develop risk management to raise its profile across the University
- Further integrate risk management into the culture and decision making of the University
- Manage risk, including the University's risk appetite

This Committee is responsible for overseeing all risks from the Corporate Risk Register for which the committee is named and reporting back on a quarterly basis in line with Audit Committee deadlines.

Membership

- Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & KE(Chair)
- Director of the Doctoral College
- Chair of Professoriate
- Associate Deans of Research & Knowledge Exchange
- Faculty representatives of Research Centres (up to 4 per Faculty)
- Students Union Affairs Officer
- Research Student Representatives x3 (one from each Faculty)
- Head of Research Degree Student Services (RDSS), Registry Services
- Head of Research Services
- Doctoral College representative
- Research Integrity Manager (Officer)
- University Librarian
- Bidding Support Team representative
- Finance representative
- Representative of Athena SWAN
- KE representative
- EDI representative

The University of Wolverhampton is committed to ensuring that the make up of its committees and sub-committees is reflective of the diversity of its staff and student populations. Chairs are responsible for inviting a diverse membership onto the committee/sub-committee. Line managers are responsible for ensuring committee service is recognised in workload allocations.

Reporting Structure

Reports to: Academic Board

Receives reports from:
- Research Awards Sub-Committee
- Ethics Sub-Committee
- Doctoral College Advisory Board
- Researcher Development Sub-Committee
- Faculty Research Committees
- Business and KEF sub-committee

Frequency
Minimum 3x per annum

Quoracy
50%

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
DOCTORAL COLLEGE ADVISORY BOARD (DCAB)

Terms of Reference

1. To advise on strategy and policy related to research students, research culture and research identity
2. To promote quality enhancements with respect to research students and research culture
3. To consider mechanisms and processes for promoting research study including research studentships
4. To engage with and respond to external developments regarding research study, including but not limited to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, the Office for Students, UKRI

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Membership
- Director of the Doctoral College (Chair)
- Associate Deans of Research & Knowledge Exchange (or nominees)
- 1 Nominated member from each Faculty
- Representative of the Scholarly Communications Team
- Doctoral College Representative
- Research Services Representative
- Students Union Officer
- Representative of RDSS, Registry Services (Officer)

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Reporting Structure
The Advisory Board reports to the University Research Committee.

Frequency
Minimum 4x per annum

Quoracy
The Doctoral College Advisory Board is considered quorate when four members are in attendance.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
RESEARCH AWARDS SUB-COMIITTEE (RASC)

Terms of Reference
1) Monitor the practices of Faculty Research Student Boards through scrutiny of the minutes, to notify University Research Committee of any matters of significance, and to disseminate examples of good practice.

2) Maintain an overview, on behalf of the University Research Committee, of annual student monitoring and recommendations to progress/withdraw

3) Approve the appointment of internal and external examiners for research degrees

4) Make decisions, based upon consideration of the reports and recommendations of the examiners, with regard to the conferment of a Research Degree

5) To bring to the attention of the University Research Committee any matters of policy or regulatory review that arise from its powers of scrutiny.

6) To carry out, on behalf of the University Research Committee, any investigations into matters of practice concerning postgraduate research degrees, as directed by said Committee.

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Membership
Nominated representatives must be research active or involved in research degree programmes.
- Director of the Doctoral College (Chair)
- Associate Deans of Research & Knowledge Exchange
- Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutors
- Research Integrity Manager, RPU
In attendance: Officer (Registry)

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Reporting Structure

The Research Awards Sub-Committee reports to the University Research Committee.
The Sub-Committee receives reports from Faculty Research Student Boards

Frequency
Minimum 6x per annum

Quoracy
The Research Awards Sub-Committee is considered quorate when there are at least 50% plus one member present.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE (ESC)

Terms of Reference
- To provide advice and make recommendations to Academic Board to enable the University to respond to the emergence of ethical issues, whether this response is prompted by the internal environment or external requirements and legislation.
- To prepare, monitor, and review the University Ethical Principles, Ethics Policy, Code of Good Research Practice and the associated ethics policy, guidance and standards, in relation to ethical issues which may arise from teaching and research activities within the University to ensure they are in line with the requirements of relevant professional associations and research funding councils.
- To confirm that the ethics review processes within the University are working effectively and that ethical considerations involving human participants or any other ethically sensitive activities are being adequately addressed at all levels.
- To advise on any issues of an ethical nature referred to it by the Deans of the Faculties, and/or Faculty Ethics Committee, or by Service Departments;
- To receive relevant papers/information from external bodies for consideration
- To oversee the appropriate development of staff and systems that support the ethical review and governance of research;
- To consider annual reports from Faculties on the management of ethical issues and the operation of Faculty Ethics Committees
- To monitor the Committee's constitution to ensure compliance with third party requirements.
- To lead on research integrity developments in response to the requirements and recommendations of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The Committee will do this by:
- Ensuring that any research/investigation at the University complies with external codes of practice and receives due consideration where there are ethical concerns. It will also act as the point of contact for external bodies and will adapt University procedures in the light of external requirements and changes.
- Ensuring that the Faculties have ethics procedures/infrastructures that are robust and effective. This will be done by receiving Faculty annual reports on their procedures for the ethical review of staff research, of postgraduate research and of undergraduate work. This will be supported, appropriately, by records and by formal minutes of decisions taken.
- Issuing guidance and advice on staff and student development needs, and through the dissemination of good practice.

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Membership
- Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & KE (Chair)
- Director of the Doctoral College
- Chairs of the Faculty Ethics Committees
- Heads of the Faculty Ethics Subject Panels
- A representative from the College of Learning & Teaching
- A Students' Union representative
- A Conduct & Appeals representative
- Research Integrity Manager (Officer)

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Frequency
Minimum 3x per annum

Reporting Structure

The Ethics Sub-Committee reports to the University Research Committee.
The Sub-Committee receives reports from Faculty Ethics Committees and from the Sponsorship Sub-Committee.

Quoracy
The Ethics Committee is considered quorate when there are at least 50% plus one members present. Co-opted members are not counted as part of the quorum.

UNIVERSITY ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE
SPONSORSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

The Sub-Committee has overall responsibility for sponsored research as stipulated in the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research (2017), which includes:

a) identifying poorly designed or planned research and poor quality research proposals, protocols or applications and ensuring that research proposals and protocols are appropriate, accurate and high quality;

b) satisfying itself that the investigators, research team and research sites are suitable to conduct the proposed research;

c) ensuring that roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in the research and any delegation by the sponsor of its tasks are agreed and documented;

d) ensuring adequate provision is made for insurance or indemnity to cover liabilities which may arise in relation to the design, management and conduct of the research project;

e) ensuring appropriate arrangements are made for making data and tissue accessible before the research starts (unless a deferral is agreed by or on behalf of the research ethics committee):

    i. adhering to agreed arrangements, with adequate consent and privacy safeguards, in a timely manner after it has finished;

    ii. ensuring arrangements for information about the findings of the research to be made available, including, where appropriate, to participants;

f) ensuring that, where expected or required, the research has approval from a research ethics committee and any other relevant approval bodies before it begins;

g) verifying that regulatory and practical arrangements are in place, before permitting the research to begin in a safe and timely manner;

h) putting and keeping in place arrangements for adequate finance and management of the research project, including its competent risk management and data management;

i) ensuring that effective procedures and arrangements are kept in place and adhered to for reporting (e.g. progress reports, safety reports) and for monitoring the research, including its conduct and the ongoing suitability of the approved proposal or protocol in the light of adverse events, changes in legislation or other developments.'

The Committee will do this by:

1) Reviewing and approving applications for University Sponsorship of Health and Social Care Research projects

2) Maintaining and monitoring a register of University sponsor approved studies.

3) Approving annual progress reports and end of study reports before submissions to the HRA/ REC.

4) Acting as the point of contact for external bodies and adapting University procedures in the light of external requirements and changes.

5) Seeking specialist advice from research subject experts and Professional Services, i.e. Legal, Finance/Insurance and Health & Safety, when required

6) Advising the Ethics Sub-committee on related policies and procedures and revising this when appropriate.

7) Issuing guidance and advice on staff development needs and through the dissemination of good practice.

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Membership
- Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & KE (Chair)
- A representative from the relevant Research Centres:
    - Healthcare Science
    - Community Research and Development
    - Caring for Lifelong Health Research Centre
    - Centre for Psychological Research
    - Sport and Physical Activity Research Centre
- Head of Doctoral Studies (FEHW)
- Research Integrity Manager (Officer)
- Co-opted member(s) as deemed appropriate.

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Frequency:
Minimum 2x per annum

Reporting Structure
The Sponsorship Sub-Committee reports to the Ethics Sub-Committee.
The Sponsorship Sub-Committee receives progress reports from Faculty Ethics Committees.

Quoracy
The Sponsorship Sub-Committee is considered quorate when there are at least 50% plus one members present. Co-opted members are not counted as part of the quorum.

FACULTY ETHICS COMMITTEE (FEC)

Terms of reference
- To ensure that the Faculty has ethics procedures/infrastructures that are robust and effective.
- To oversee Faculty ethical review processes including management and monitoring of the Ethics Subject Panels to ensure that applications are reviewed effectively and rigorously.
- To provide subject specific advice, guidance and training to staff and students on ethical issues to ensure that research is undertaken in accordance with the ethical Policies, Principles and guidelines that constitute the University of Wolverhampton ethical framework.
- To review and monitor ethical issues associated with undergraduate and postgraduate research projects and staff research.
- To develop ethical procedures within the Faculty as necessary to accommodate novel areas of research and to ensure compliance with appropriate external regulatory or legislative requirements
- To provide advice and make recommendations to the Faculty Research Committee to enable the Faculty to respond to the emergence of ethical issues, whether this response is prompted by the internal or the external environment.
- To disseminate good practice and to ensure that subject specific training and development is provided to staff and students
- To provide an annual report to the Ethics Sub-committee

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Membership
- Associate Dean Research and Knowledge Exchange (Chair) or nominee (to be approved by URC)
- Heads of the Faculty Ethics Subject Panels
- Post Graduate Research Tutor / Head of Doctoral Studies
- Dean of Faculty (*ex-officio*)
- Subject Representatives (least 12 members drawn from departments across the Faculty)
- Lay person member
- Research Support Administrator (Officer)

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Frequency:
Minimum 3x per annum

Reporting Structure
Faculty Ethics Committees report to Faculty Research Committees.
The University Ethics Sub-Committee receives reports from Faculty Ethics Committee via the Faculty Research Committee.

Quoracy
The Ethics Committee is considered quorate when there are at least 50% plus one member present. Co-opted members are not counted as part of the quorum.

FACULTY ETHICS SUBJECT PANELS (ESP)

Constitution
The Ethics Subject Panels are constituted to ensure that all research undertaken by staff and students is carried out ethically and responsibly. Subject panels are able to undertake an ethical review of any relevant research project being conducted within the Faculty.

Institutional Research and all individual research and scholarship related to learning, teaching and assessment and the student experience within the University undergoes ethical review by the Education Subject Panel.

Purpose & Scope
The role of the subject panels is to conduct ethical review of applications for research ethics approval submitted by staff or students. It seeks to ensure that staff, students, and research participants are protected from possible harm and that their rights are both respected and protected.

In alignment with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity the subject panels will take a principles based approach to their decision making:

1) **Independence** – ethics review must operate free from conflicts of interest so that the application of ethics principles and reasoning is neither impeded nor compromised.

2) **Competence** - Ethics review and other processes supporting institutional best practice and sector standards must be consistent, coherent and well-informed.

3) **Facilitation** - Ethics review and other supporting processes must make the facilitation of ethically sound research a priority.

4) **Transparency & Accountability** - Decisions and advice must be open to public scrutiny and responsibilities must be recognised and discharged consistently.

Terms of reference
- To consider applications for ethical approval on behalf of the Faculty Ethics Committee, and to provide an ethics opinion on the research, whether:
  - Approved as proposed
  - Approved subject to conditions
  - Not approved; and to advise on the basis of such ethics opinions.
- To take account of relevant Government legislation and requirements such as the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, the Prevent Strategy 2011, and the Disclosure and Barring Service in its considerations.
- To take account of legitimate interests of other individuals, bodies and communities, associated with the research and provide reassurance to the public and to outside bodies that their legitimate interests have been protected.
- To exercise powers to require the halting of research if substantive ethical problems are identified as an approved project progresses until such time as any such concerns have been remedied to the satisfaction of the panel.
- To withdraw approval when concerns such as those identified above are not remedied to the satisfaction of the panel.

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The role of reviewers

Reviewers are expected to perform a thorough review and submit detailed and meaningful comments on each ethics application. Detailed and meaningful comments are defined as those which point out specific issues to be corrected in the application and supporting documentation or specific points for clarification. They must contribute new and relevant information over and above that provided by other reviewers. This does not include comments which are duplicated from other members or limited to statements such as 'I agree with the above'. The decision regarding whether the comments made by a specific member fit with this definition is at the discretion of the Chair.

Specialist Advice

The Chair may invite an individual to give specialist advice to the panel. Such individuals however should not participate in the final decision-making of the panel.

Declaration of Interest

When a reviewer perceives a conflict of interest – for example, when they have a direct involvement in the research project being reviewed or have had personal dealings with the individual and the application being reviewed– they shall declare this to the Chair. In these circumstances, the reviewer abstains from reviewing the application.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (RDSC)

Terms of reference
The committee will:
- Ensure that the University meets the expectations of all Concordats, including but not limited to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and Codes of Conduct pertaining to researcher development, training, and capability, as well as RCUK's Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training and RCUK's Statement of Expectations for Research Fellowships and Future Research Leaders.
- Develop and review action plans in relation to researcher development and highlight any barriers to achievement of the actions.
- Make recommendations to other University Committees where necessary about areas of activity not outlined in the action plan.
- Take responsibility for the communication and dissemination of activities to Faculties/Schools/Services where applicable, and oversee the effective implementation of action plans and recommendations.
- Oversee attainment of the HR Excellence in Research award and regular review of the criteria.

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Constitution & Membership
The committee will strive to maintain a membership that reflects a rich diversity, taking positive action to achieve this where necessary. Researcher representatives sit on the committee for a period of no more than 3 years.

- Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & KE (Chair)
- HR Associate Director Organisational Development
- Director of the Doctoral College
- Associate Professor of Equality in Learning and Teaching
- Chair of Professoriate
- Researcher representatives, 1 to represent each Faculty
- Representative from Careers Services
- Head of Research Services

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Frequency:
Minimum 3x per annum

Reporting Structure
The Researcher Development Sub-committee reports to the University Research Committee.

Quoracy
The Committee is considered quorate when at least 50% of members are present. Co-opted members are not counted as part of the quorum.

FACULTY RESEARCH COMMITTEE (FRC)

Terms of Reference
- To formulate, implement and continually review the Faculty research strategy that include sub-strategies for Faculty-funded investment in research and the award of research studentships;

- To stimulate research effort throughout the Faculty and to provide the quality assurance and monitoring processes for ensuring high calibre research performance and research student supervision;

- To develop, implement and oversee the operation of a Faculty research staff mentoring plan and manage monitoring of early career researchers and application through ERAS scheme or similar early career support schemes;

- To seek to stimulate research that underpins course development, impacts upon the curriculum, and meets the needs of industry, commerce and the professions;

- To ensure that the Regulations and relevant codes of practice of the University relating to the award of its research degrees are complied with and that the standards of the awards, successful student progression and the interests of students are preserved;

- To ensure the currency of research supervisor training in liaison with the Doctoral College;

- To appoint an individual responsible for overseeing Faculty-based subject-specific and generic research skills provision for research students and for monitoring take-up and effectiveness of this training in liaison with the Research Policy Unit (RPU) and the Doctoral College;

- To coordinate Faculty preparations for submissions to the Research Excellence Framework (REF);

- To arrange inaugural lectures for newly appointed Faculty professors;

- To establish and keep under review a Faculty research seminar programme ensuring that each Faculty provides a vibrant programme covering all areas of its responsibility and that this is widely advertised within the Faculty and via the RPU at University level;

- To monitor staff and faculty input to ELEMENTS and WIRE;

- To provide a quarterly report of its activities to the University Research Committee;

- To produce an annual Faculty research report for external stakeholders and the general public and ensure that research successes are communicated to Marketing and Communications for publicity purposes.

- To formulate, deploy and monitor action plans to ensure that Faculty research procedures are compliant with both the requirements of the University's Athena Swan membership and obligations to relevant Equality and Diversity legislation.

- To manage and monitor research bids, income and surpluses

- To monitor the Faculty Research Student Boards (FRSB) as a sub-committee of FRC.

- To monitor the Faculty Ethics committee (FEC) as a sub-committee of FRC.

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Membership

- Associate Dean of Research & KE (Chair)
- Postgraduate Research Tutor(s)
- Director of the Doctoral College
- Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee
- Head of each Research Centre
- Designated Research Impact Officer, RPU
- Designated Research Development Manager, RPU
- Library Representative
- Faculty Research Student Representatives
- Dean of Faculty (ex officio)
- Head of Research Services
- Research Support Administrator (Officer)

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Frequency
Minimum 4x per annum

Reporting Structure

- The Faculty Research Committee reports to the faculty DAG, Faculty Board, and University Research Committee.
- The Faculty Research Committee receives reports from the Research Student Boards and the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Quoracy
The Committee is considered quorate when there are at least 50% plus one members present. Co-opted members are not counted as part of the quorum.

RESEARCH STUDENT BOARD (RSB)

Terms of Reference
- On behalf of the Faculty Research Committee, to ensure that the Regulations and associated codes of practice relating to the award of research degrees are complied with, and that the standards of the awards and the interests of the students are ensured

- On behalf of the Faculty Research Committee, to consider and approve registrations for the university's research degrees

- To provide timely and effective monitoring of research student progress, including annual progress reviews and progression stages

- To monitor e-vision logs to ensure supervisory meetings take place at intervals specified in the research degree regulations.

- To provide initial scrutiny of proposed examination arrangements

- To provide appropriate opportunities for subject-specific research training and personal development of research students, and consider student applications to attend conferences

- To ensure that research degree supervisors are up-to-date in respect of mandatory training

- To consider the principles of Athena SWAN in respect of research students and research student supervision

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Membership
- Associate Dean for Research & Knowledge Exchange - Chair
- Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor(s)
- Faculty Research Support Tutor
- Faculty Research Skills Development Tutor
- At least one active researcher from each subject area covered by the remit of the RSB (minimum of 3)
- One member external to the RSB (either from the Doctoral College or the RSB of another faculty)
- Representative of Research Degree Student Services, Registry (Officer)

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Frequency of Meetings
Normally 6 per annum (approx. bi-monthly)

Reporting Structure
The Research Student Board reports to the Faculty Research Committee and the University Research Awards Sub-committee.

Quoracy
6 minimum