



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



# UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

## Constitutions and terms of reference

The University is currently going through a process of restructuring which will impact on committee memberships and terms of reference. These will therefore remain flexible until the structure has been finalised at which point committee constitutions will be reconsidered.

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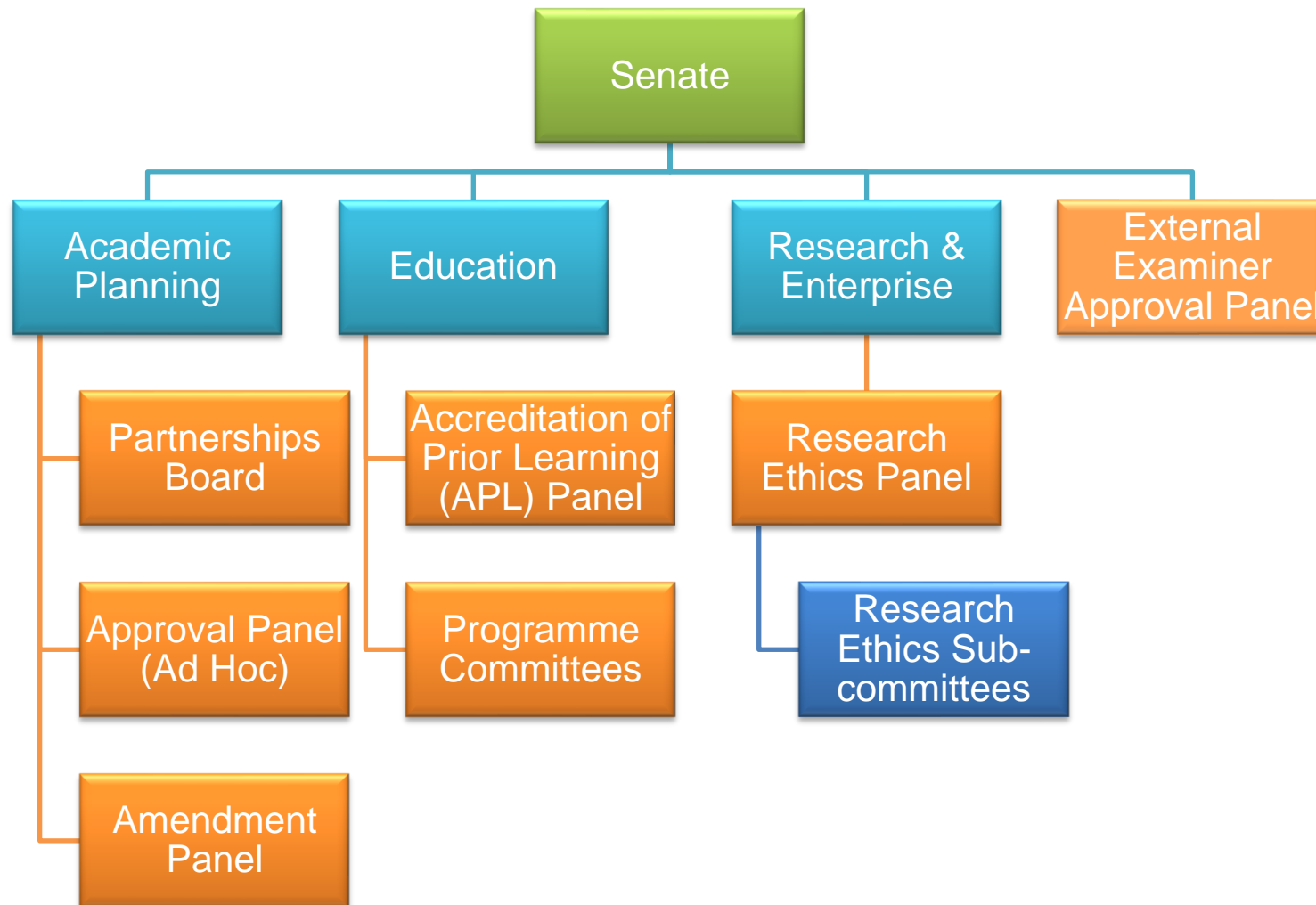
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This document has been designed to be accessible for readers. However, should you require the document in an alternative format please contact the Academic Registry.

## Introduction

- 1 This document sets out the terms of reference for the University's Deliberative Committee structure.
- 2 The University is required by its *Instrument and Articles of Government* to have a Senate which is responsible for the quality and standards of the awards made in its name. Senate may establish such committees as it considers necessary in accordance with the process set out in the *Articles*. A structure diagram is available below (see Figure 1):
- 3 Where the University has a separate formal document relating to a specific process – e.g. Academic Appeals, External Examiners – the detail regarding constitutions and terms of reference is published within the relevant document and not republished here.
- 4 A schedule of all University Committees (including Council) is published annually by the Academic Registry.

Figure 1: Deliberative Committee Structure



## Senate

Reports to	Council
Standing Committees	<p>Academic Planning Committee</p> <p>Education Committee</p> <p>Research and Enterprise Committee</p> <p>Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Examiner Approval Panel – See <i>External Examining Policy</i> for Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Honorary Awards Committee (also reports to Council and Terms of Reference included in <i>Council Committees: Constitutions and Terms of Reference</i>)</li> </ul>
Minutes	Open minutes published on the University website
Frequency of meetings	<p>Up to four per academic year</p> <p>Additionally, one joint meeting with Council for the purposes of Annual Monitoring</p>
Updated/reviewed	December 2019

### Membership:

Chair	Vice-Chancellor
Secretary	Appointed by the Academic Registrar
Ex-officio Members	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor</p> <p>Pro Vice-Chancellor(s)</p> <p>Academic Registrar</p> <p>Director of Student Success</p> <p>Heads of School</p> <p>Director of Enterprise and Research</p>
Other Members	<p>One member of the professoriate</p> <p>One teaching representative from each School, elected by the School's academic employees under arrangements devised by Senate and approved by Council.</p>

	<p>One representative from the non ex-officio members of the following committees, nominated by its Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Committee</li> <li>• Research &amp; Enterprise Committee</li> <li>• Partnerships Board</li> </ul> <p><i>These members shall serve for a term of two years, renewable for a further two years.</i></p>
Student Members	<p>President of the Students' Union</p> <p>Students' Union Vice-President (Education &amp; Welfare)</p> <p><i>Note: Student membership of Senate is established in the Council Procedures and is jointly agreed between the Students' Union and Council.</i></p>
Co-opted Members	By invitation of the Chair

### Terms of Reference:

- a. To approve, as appropriate, academic awards and qualifications and their regulations.
- b. To establish a committee structure, together with Terms of Reference and Membership, for the academic work of the University and which is accountable to Senate for quality and standards within agreed resources.
 

*Note: So far as is practicable, Senate will delegate its functions to nominated specialised University units as permitted within the Scheme of Delegation.*
- c. To debate, decide on and communicate Senate's view about issues and reports deriving from the University and sources external to the University community.
- d. To have overall responsibility for the admission, progression, assessment and examination of the academic performance of students as well as the exclusion of students under the regulations.
- e. To have overall responsibility for the standards of awards and quality of provision, including the formal appointment and termination of external examiners.
- f. To receive regular reports on all aspects of University provision, including student experience, courses, research and knowledge exchange, equality, diversity and inclusion issues, and external activity, and take such action as is necessary to safeguard quality and standards.
- g. To report to Council the University's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, including the publication of data (annually) and achievement against objectives.
- h. To recommend to Council the Access and Participation Plan and to monitor its implementation.
- i. To approve processes for validation, re-validation, monitoring, review and reporting on academic matters (policies, practices, courses or other) to underwrite Senate's responsibilities as required by the *Instrument or Articles of Government*.

- j. To receive reports monitoring University research and scholarly activity.
- k. To recommend formal institutional submissions for approval and to agree formal University responses to external bodies as required.
- l. To report to the Council about academic affairs of the University as prescribed by the *Articles of Government*.
- m. To receive Minutes from Council.
- n. To exercise such other functions as are conferred upon it by the *Articles of Government*, Council members or by accredited status within the Senate's remit as arbiter of academic standards.

*Note: This will include conferment of Honorary Awards, responsibility for which will be shared jointly with Council*

**Notes:**

- 1 The University is required by Council to set up a Senate and approve its constitution, Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure as specified in the *Articles of Government*, as approved by the Privy Council in January 2010.
- 2 The *Articles of Government* provide for a membership of no more than 40 members, comprising the Vice-Chancellor (who shall be Chair) and such other employees and students as may from time to time be approved by the Council. Taken together, the following categories will comprise at least half the membership: members of the University Executive Team and the University Management Group.
- 3 Voting shall be by show of hands unless a ballot is requested by at least five members.
- 4 Student members of Senate may be required to withdraw from any part of a meeting where a named student, past, present or prospective, is being discussed.
- 5 Proxies and alternates may **not** attend Senate in place of appointed Senate members in accordance with *Council Procedures*.
- 6 Others may attend and speak to items at the invitation of the Chair.

## Academic Planning Committee

Reports to	Senate
Standing Committees	Partnerships Board Approval Panel – See <i>Programme Approval and Amendment Policy</i> . This meets on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis as new programmes are developed. Amendment Panel – See <i>Programme Approval and Amendment Policy</i>
Minutes	Not published – Reserved minutes only
Frequency of meetings	Monthly (or as required)
Updated/reviewed	October 2020

### Membership:

Chair	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Secretary	Appointed by the Academic Registrar
Ex-officio Members	Pro Vice-Chancellor(s) Academic Registrar (or nominee) Director of Finance (or nominee) Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment (or nominee) Director of Strategic Planning and Change (or nominee) Director of Student Success (or nominee) Heads of Academic Schools and Institutes Students' Union Vice-President: Education and Welfare
Other Members	Representative from the Apprenticeship Hub
Co-opted Members	Others may attend by invitation of the Chair

### Terms of Reference:

- a To ensure that the University's academic taught portfolio\* is continually developed and enhanced in response to changes in external markets and activities and remains in line with the University's Strategic Plan.

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\* The 'academic taught portfolio' includes apprenticeship programmes, short or professional courses, and the taught elements of professional doctoral programmes (with cross-reference to the Research & Enterprise Committee as appropriate). It also includes all programmes delivered by partners under either a validated or franchise arrangement.



- b To approve on behalf of Senate and through a relevant Panel where necessary:
  - proposals for new undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes ensuring that marketing, resourcing, estates, IT, financial and quality concerns have been fully considered and addressed and that an appropriate tuition fee band has been assigned
  - withdrawal of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes ensuring that the impact on students and other stakeholders have been fully considered and addressed
- c To receive regular overview reports as follows:
  - confirmation of new programmes approved by Senate following a formal approval event and that such programmes are being actively advertised
  - recruitment to new programmes approved at the 12-month and 24-month after an initial intake
  - overview reports on amendments to existing programmes approved through the course amendment process and to consider overarching issues arising
  - tuition fee banding assignments through the work of a formally designated fee setting group as approved by Recruitment and Admissions Steering Group
- d To report annually to Senate on the development of the University's academic portfolio.
- e To embed strategic priorities into courses taught at the University and to promote initiatives to reduce their environmental impact
- f To ensure that the University's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion are considered in the fulfilment of these terms of reference

**Notes:**

- 1 Others may attend and speak to items at the invitation of the Chair.

## Partnerships Board

Reports to	Academic Planning Committee (Minutes also to Education Committee)
Standing Committees	None
Non-Standing Committees	None
Minutes	Yes – Not Published Externally
Executive summary required	No
Frequency of meetings	Termly
Updated/reviewed	December 2017

### Membership:

Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor: External Engagement
Secretary	Senior Registry Officer (Educational Partnerships)
Ex-officio Members	Chair of Education Committee Head of Admissions, M&SR Director of Finance (or nominee) Head of Library Services (or nominee) Heads of School (on rotation) Head of Apprenticeships Unit (or nominee) Principal Registry Officer (Educational Partnerships)
Other Members	Two Partnership Tutors to be identified annually by the Chair to ensure appropriate representation reflecting depth, breadth or complexity of current or planned provision  Academic Registry representative
Co-opted Members	As needed for particular meetings

### Terms of Reference:

1. To develop and be responsible to Academic Planning Committee and Senate for the University's educational partnership strategy
2. To develop and monitor a risk register for educational partnership activity

3. To develop appropriate models of engagement for educational partnership activity, making recommendation to Academic Planning Committee as appropriate on the use of University resources
4. To develop and be responsible to Academic Planning Committee for a framework for the development and approval of educational partnership activity including the use and effectiveness of an appropriate suite of documentation
5. To oversee the development and use, and monitor the effectiveness of, formal legal agreements with educational partner institutions, to ensure they provide appropriate safeguards for the University and its students
6. To oversee the process by which educational partnership Student Fees and Student Registration Fees are reapproved to ensure consistency and enable budgetary forecasting
7. To consider the minutes/notes of partnership management groups and take or recommend action as needed.
8. To oversee the initial, full and ongoing Due Diligence procedures to ensure they remain effective.
9. To approve the development and monitor the implementation of educational partnership plans with particular partners
10. To oversee the effectiveness of the University's Partnership Tutor system, maintaining an appropriate role descriptor and monitoring activity
11. To monitor the effectiveness of standard University procedures e.g. admissions, induction, module evaluation, programme committees, annual monitoring, as they are implemented with educational partner institutions
12. To undertake all the above responsibilities with appropriate regard for the needs of the University and its staff and students and in light of developments in the sector

**Notes:**

1. Others may attend and speak to items at the invitation of the Chair.

## Education Committee

Reports to	Senate
Standing Committees	Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Panel – see <i>Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy and Procedure</i> Programme Committees
Minutes	Open minutes published on the University website
Frequency of meetings	Four per academic year (including one to consider Annual Monitoring)
Updated/reviewed	September 2020

### Membership:

Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor: Education and Digital
Secretary	Appointed by the Academic Registrar
Ex-officio Members	Academic Registrar (or nominee) Head of Students and Wellbeing Head of Learning and Teaching Excellence One representative of each School Leadership Team (with School-wide responsibility for the Education portfolio) Students' Union Vice-President (Education and Welfare) Students' Union Vice-President (Student Involvement)
Other Members	One representative per School nominated by the Head of School Representative of the Apprenticeship Hub Representative of the Directorate of Strategic Planning & Change Representative of the Directorate of Marketing and Student Recruitment <i>Nominated members shall serve for a term of two years, renewable for a further two years.</i>
Student Members	A BAME student representative as nominated by the Students' Union

	<p>A representative of the undergraduate student body as nominated by the Students' Union</p> <p>A representative of the postgraduate student body as nominated by the Students' Union</p>
Co-opted Members	By invitation of the Chair
In attendance	<p>Director of Student Success</p> <p>A representative of the Human Resources Directorate</p> <p>A representative of the Information Systems &amp; Technology Directorate</p>

### Terms of Reference:

- a. To develop and be responsible to Senate for the University's education strategy and associated strategies and policies relating to the student experience and the recruitment, retention, and employability of its students, including:
  - the enhancement of teaching excellence and pedagogy through staff development and other means
  - the enhancement of all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment, especially through the identification and promotion of good practice
  - the consideration of innovative methods of delivery of programmes, such as technology enhanced learning
  - the promotion of student career enhancement and employability across the university
  - the review of the quality of provision in the areas of widening participation, learning resources, learning development and support for students with disabilities
  - the development of actions deriving from internal and external student feedback, including the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Graduate Outcomes Survey, and overviews of module evaluation and similar surveys
  - the monitoring of actions arising from student appeals and complaints
  - the consideration of regular reports from the Students' Union on education-related issues and feedback from Programme Committees.
- b. To develop and be responsible to Senate for a framework of academic quality assurance and standards for all taught programmes delivered both at the University and with its partners, including:
  - responsibility for the development and maintenance of regulations, policies and procedures as they relate to the quality framework taking into account internal and external developments
  - responsibility for the effective implementation of approval, annual and periodic review processes

- the auditing and review of the University's annual monitoring processes and identification of themes arising
  - the maintenance of oversight of the requirements of external quality bodies, such as the Office for Students, the Quality Assurance Agency, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and other Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).
- c. To advise on activities to enable the University to comply with education processes and enhancement in relation to the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).
  - d. To oversee the drafting, development, monitoring and effective implementation of the University's Access and Participation Plan.
  - e. To oversee the drafting and annual updating of the University's Degree Outcomes Statement for approval by Senate and Council.
  - f. To ensure that the University's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion are taken into account in the fulfilment of these terms of reference.

**Notes:**

1. Others may attend and speak to items at the invitation of the Chair. Those in attendance do not have voting rights and will not be required for meeting quorum.

## Programme Committees

There should be a Programme Committee for each cluster of courses offered by the University. The Programme Committee is responsible for matters relating to the operation, delivery and standards of programmes offered within the subject area.

*A fundamental review of Programme Committee organisation and management will be undertaken in consultation with Students' Union representatives during 2017-2018.*

Reports to	Education Committee
Standing Committees	None
Minutes	Action Notes only – circulated internally
Frequency of meetings	Two per year
Updated/reviewed	June 2018

### Membership:

Chair	Head of School (or nominee) / Student Representative Joint Chair
Secretary	Appointed by the Academic Registry
Ex-officio Members	Head of School Associate Head of School
Other Members	Module / Year tutors (including Associate Lecturers where practical)  Students representing all levels of the programme / course and each mode of delivery (to be appointed in accordance with procedures managed by Bucks Students' Union)  Technician representation where appropriate  Placements co-ordinator representative where appropriate  Students' Union representative
Co-opted Members	None

### Terms of Reference:

- a. To provide a forum for staff and students to discuss the management of courses in the programme and the content, delivery and assessment of modules, in order to identify appropriate actions to address the issues raised

- b. To provide an opportunity for formal student feedback on the programme to be recorded in order to support the University's Annual Monitoring process
- c. To share good practice in relation to the maintenance and enhancement of student learning opportunities
- d. To provide a forum where University policies and procedures can be discussed and clarifications provided
- e. To consider opportunities for and plan future developments of the programme delivery and content
- f. To identify potential cross-University themes and issues arising to be reported to the University's Education Committee

### Notes

Programme Committees can operate actually or virtually, or use a combination of both methods, depending on the mode of delivery and/or the study pattern of the programme concerned. Virtual meetings may be structured in any way that meets the needs of the particular student body.

The agenda and subsequent discussion should be structured around the following areas of the student learning experience (these are based on the NSS questions):

- **Teaching on the Course**, including how good staff are at explaining things, whether they have made the subject interesting, whether the course is intellectually stimulating, and if it has challenged students to achieve their best work
- **Learning Opportunities**, including whether the course is providing opportunities to explore ideas in depth, whether there are opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics, and whether the course is providing opportunities to apply what has been learned
- **Assessment and Feedback**, including criteria for marking, the fairness of the marking and assessment process, whether feedback has been timely (i.e. within the three-week turnaround), and whether comments on work were helpful
- **Academic Support**, including how easy it was to contact staff when necessary, whether sufficient advice and guidance on the course has been provided, and whether good advice was available when needed to inform study choices
- **Organisation and Management**, including whether the course is well-organised and running smoothly, any timetabling issues, and whether changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively
- **Learning Resources**, including the extent to which both library resources and IT resources and facilities have supported learning, and whether course-specific resources have been accessible when needed
- **Learning Community**, including how students have been made to feel part of a community of staff and students, and the opportunities they have had to work with other students
- **Student Voice**, including whether the opportunities to provide feedback are right, how staff value students' views, and how feedback has been acted on



Ahead of the meeting, student representatives are expected to gather input from their fellow cohort(s) of students on issues to be raised, including both good practice examples as well as issues of concern. If student representatives are unable to attend the meeting, they should attempt to nominate a replacement.

Short Action Notes (rather than minutes) will be used to document the meeting and capture issues under the headings above. These will be circulated to members and will record the detail of the action required (including a brief context where necessary), the timescale for completion, as well as the member of the committee responsible for pursuing the action. An update on actions should be provided prior to the next meeting to close the feedback loop. Action notes should also include details of issues that were resolved during the meeting so that these can be referred back to if necessary.

## Research and Enterprise Committee

Reports to	Senate (Senior Management Team – ToR [b])
Standing Committees	Research Ethics Panel
Minutes	Open minutes published on the University website
Frequency of meetings	Four per year
Updated/reviewed	August 2018

### Membership:

Chair	Pro / Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Secretary	Appointed by the Research Development Unit Manager
Ex-officio Members	Head of Business Engagement Director of Institute Chair of Research Ethics Panel REF Academic Lead Research Development Unit Manager
Other Members	One representative per School nominated by the Head of School  One member from and nominated by each of the University's validating partners for research degrees ( <i>to attend for items relating to research degree programmes only</i> )  <i>Nominated members shall serve for a term of two years, renewable for a further two years.</i>
Student Members	One student representative nominated by the Director of Institute to serve for a period of one year.  One representative from and appointed by the Students' Union to serve for a period of one year.
Co-opted Members	By invitation of the Chair

### Terms of Reference:

- a To promote research, enterprise and scholarship across the University, including:
- alignment to and compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity

- the identification of priority areas for effort
  - the development and monitoring of strategies, policies and practices to stimulate activities in the agreed areas, ensuring there is an appropriate framework in place for their oversight
  - recommending to Senate (and Senior Management where applicable) the establishment of institutes to support the University's strategies
  - setting and monitoring targets for income generation from such activities
  - ensuring that support mechanisms are appropriate and fit for purpose
  - monitoring the effective publication, dissemination and communication of research and enterprise activity, internally and externally.
- b To monitor on behalf of Senate the research student infrastructure and the strategy relating to the award of university postgraduate research, including:
- recommending to Senate the approval of Research Degree Programmes
  - ensuring that the regulations of the University and its validating partners are complied with in the delivery, assessment and awarding of research degrees (including Professional Doctorate programmes), especially in relation to:-
    - registration and enrolment, including transfer from MPhil to PhD registration
    - changes in supervisory arrangements
    - proposed examination arrangements, including the appointment of Examiners
  - formulating policy on matters relating to research degrees and students undertaking them in accordance with those regulations
  - providing appropriate training for students and supervisors
  - reviewing student progression and achievement annually and undertaking analysis of internal and external student feedback, such as the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)
  - providing an annual report to Senate and the University's validating partners on the progress of research degree students.
- c To maintain oversight of the requirements in relation to research and enterprise activity from external agencies such as UK Research and Innovation, the Office for Students and the Quality Assurance Agency.
- d To advise on activities to enable the University to prepare for and make submissions to the Research Excellence Framework.
- e To monitor the governance framework for research ethics.
- f To ensure that the University's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion are taken into account in the fulfilment of these terms of reference.

**Notes:**

- 1 Others may attend and speak to items at the invitation of the Chair. This will include members of the RED Unit and central service directorates to attend for items as appropriate

- 2 Student members will be required to withdraw from any part of a meeting where a named student, past, present or prospective, is being discussed.

## Research Ethics Panel

Reports to	Research and Enterprise Committee
Standing Committees	Research Ethics Sub-committees
Minutes	Not published
Frequency of meetings	10 times per year
Updated/reviewed	June 2018

### Membership:

Chair	Appointed by the Chair of the Research and Enterprise Committee
Secretary	Appointed by the Research Development Unit Manager
Ex-officio Members	None
Other Members	<p>One representative from the Research &amp; Enterprise Development (RED) Unit</p> <p>Pool of Panel members</p> <p><i>Up to 21 employees nominated by the Schools representing different academic disciplines / methodologies. A minimum of four members to attend each meeting for quorum</i></p> <p>Up to two lay members from the local community with no affiliation to the University</p> <p><i>Nominated members shall serve for a term of two years, renewable for a further two years.</i></p>
Co-opted Members	By invitation of the Chair

### Terms of Reference:

- a. To monitor and review the University's Ethics Framework in light of the external ethics environment and legal considerations and propose changes as required to the Research and Enterprise Committee.
- b. To contribute to the promulgation of good, ethical research practice, or to projects being undertaken within the University, with regard to the approved research ethics framework and policies.
- c. To consider research investigations undertaken by employees and students of the University and to allow, refer back or disallow such proposals, specifying where necessary any conditions subject to which such proposals may be allowed.

- d. To consider other research investigations as appropriate which may be undertaken under the auspices of the University or involve its staff or students as participants and to allow, refer back or disallow such proposals.
- e. To receive end of study reports from projects approved by the Panel and ensure action is taken on any recommendations arising from them.
- f. To set up sub-groups for specific areas as required to consider applications and report decisions and issues to the Panel.
- g. To set up working groups to investigate areas identified by the Panel in the ethics environment as requiring clarification, led by members of the Panel, and reporting back to the Panel.
- h. To provide executive summaries to the Research and Enterprise Committee.
- i. To provide an annual report on research integrity to the Research and Enterprise Committee providing assurance to the relevant sector body on annual accountability returns.
- j. To ensure that the University's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion are taken into account in the fulfilment of these terms of reference

**Notes:**

- 1. Observers are encouraged to attend the Panel.
- 2. Panel members are expected to attend a minimum of 4 out of the 10 meetings each year.
- 3. Panel members must attend training sessions to comply with external and internal requirements.

## Research Ethics Sub-committees

Every Academic School requires at least one Research Ethics Sub-committee.

Reports to	Research Ethics Panel
Standing Committees	None
Minutes	Not published
Frequency of meetings	Schools are responsible for convening meetings as required
Updated/reviewed	March 2019

### Membership:

Chair	Appointed by the Head of School from among the membership
Secretary	None
Ex-officio Members	None
Other Members	A minimum of three academic staff within the School with relevant experience  At least one academic staff member should be external to the supervisory team / course module for the submissions under review
Co-opted Members	None

### Terms of Reference:

- a. To review all research investigations, proposed by students within the School which involve human participants, tissue, or data. To ensure that all documents used for participant recruitment are reviewed by the sub-committee.
- b. To allow, refer back or disallow such proposals, specifying where necessary any conditions subject to which such proposals may be allowed and be reconsidered within a given timeframe.
- c. To ensure that research projects meet the key ethical principles, codes, frameworks, or guidelines of appropriate professional and statutory bodies. To ensure that research projects are consistent with the *University Ethics Policy and Code of Good Research Practice*.
- d. To refer to the Research Ethics Panel any proposals which the sub-committee assesses as warranting a more detailed analysis of ethical implications prior to giving consent.

- e. To collate and store electronic copies of all students' ethics documents for audit by the University Ethics Panel, e.g. using a Turnitin submission point.
- f. To provide annual summaries of activity to the University Ethics Panel.