

**The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Researcher Experience Committee
Terms of Reference**

1. Purpose and Role

- 1.1 The Researcher Experience Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senatus, for postgraduate research degree training, higher degrees and provision for the training of other, early career researchers.
- 1.2 The Committee provides a forum to facilitate and encourage the development of appropriate strategy and also discusses and promotes relevant developments, whether internally driven or externally indicated.

2. Remit

The remit of the Researcher Experience Committee is to:

- 2.1 Discuss, formulate and promote strategic initiatives which enhance the Postgraduate Research student experience and the early researcher experience and which contribute to and support attainment of the University's objectives.
- 2.2 Offer strategic advice on the University's provision of postgraduate research programmes in order to support continued growth and development.
- 2.3 Support the creation and development of a high level research skills and employability training framework.
- 2.4 Promote and promulgate specific innovations, embracing new pedagogies and technologies, in support of the enhancement of the research experience.
- 2.5 Approve any specific developments or initiatives which could have substantial implications for University strategy or policy or for University level services and/or operations.
- 2.6 Proactively engage with any high level issues or themes arising from the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, the International Student Barometer, the Careers in Research Online Survey and other relevant internal and external satisfaction surveys, including outcomes from REF and internal Postgraduate Programme Reviews.
- 2.7 Engage in horizon scanning to anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in postgraduate research student education and the early career researcher experience.
- 2.8 Proactively and positively respond to any changes, initiatives and developments in the external environment which relate to postgraduate research student education and/or the training of early career researchers.

3. Governance

- 3.1 The Committee will act with authority, as delegated by the Senatus, in order to take decisions in the area of postgraduate research student education and support and training for early career researchers.
- 3.2 In taking forward its remit, the Committee will support and encourage diversity and variation where this is beneficial, whilst seeking consistency and common approaches, where these are in the best interests of staff and students.

- 3.3 The Committee shall report direct to the Senatus as necessary, but at least annually.
- 3.4 The Committee shall liaise with relevant Court Committees and with specific managers and offices in respect of issues or instances where matters of academic policy intersect with management issues. The Committee will specifically interact with the University Staff Committee and the Human Resources Department in areas of relevance.
- 3.5 The Committee shall identify and agree the ways in which it will periodically interact and exchange information with relevant University services in matters relating to the early researcher experience.

4. Operation

- 4.1 The Committee will meet at least four times per annum. The Committee will also interact electronically, as is necessary for its business to be effectively progressed.
- 4.2 The Committee may also meet electronically to note formal items or items which are not considered to be of strategic importance.
- 4.3 The Committee will follow a strategic agenda which is set prior to the start of the Academic Year and which is agreed through consultation with Senatus, the Convenors of the other Senatus Committees, and other relevant members of the University community.
- 4.4 It is expected that limited life Task Groups will be critical to the detailed examination of, and consultation on, the strategic issues which make up the majority of the Committee's work.
- 4.5 Task Groups will be given a clear brief and will consult as appropriate during their work in order to ensure the confidence of the Committee, the Senatus, and the wider University Community in the resulting conclusions and recommendations.
- 4.6 Information on Task Group activities will be made available electronically to ensure that members of the University Community are kept informed and can contribute to specific developments.
- 4.7 Agenda, papers and approved minutes will be published on the University's web pages in accordance with the University's agreed publication scheme and the status of the above listed in respect of freedom of information legislation. This will include details of the membership of the Committee.

5. Composition

- 5.1 The Committee shall be convened by the Assistant Principal Researcher Development.
- 5.2 At its first meeting the Committee shall identify a Vice-Convenor for the Committee from amongst its membership. The Vice-Convenor should serve for a period of at least one year.
- 5.3 The Colleges shall each nominate a senior member of staff within the College who has responsibility for postgraduate research students.
- 5.4 The Edinburgh University Students Association shall nominate an appropriate Research Postgraduate Student Representative and an appropriate member of permanent staff who shall be an ex officio member.
- 5.5 The Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development shall be an ex officio member of the Committee.

- 5.6 The University Secretary or his/her representative shall be an ex officio member of the Committee. The University Secretary or his/her representative shall also identify a member of staff from Academic Services to act as the expert academic governance member of the Committee.
- 5.7 The Director of Human Resources shall be an ex officio member of the Committee.
- 5.8 The Colleges shall each nominate a Postgraduate Research Student member.
- 5.9 The Colleges shall each nominate an Early Career Researcher Representative.
- 5.10 Up to 5 additional members may be co-opted onto the Committee by the Convenor depending on the expertise required. Co-opted members will normally serve a three year term.
- 5.11 The Convenor may invite individuals by invitation for specific meetings or agenda items.
- 5.12 Substitutions of members (due to an inability to attend) shall be at the discretion of the Convenor of the Committee.
- 5.13 The University Secretary will be responsible for ensuring the provision of secretariat support for the Committee.
- 5.14 The Convenors of the other Senatus Committees shall receive papers for the Committee and can attend any of the meetings.

6. Responsibilities and Expectations of Committee Members

All members of the Committee:

- 6.1 Are expected to be collegial and constructive in approach.
- 6.2 Should attend regularly and participate fully in the work of the Committee and its Task Groups. This will involve looking ahead and consulting/gathering input in order to provide the broad spectrum of thoughts and opinions which are necessary for proper consideration of the area being discussed.
- 6.3 Will need to take collective and individual ownership for the issues under the Committee's remit and for the discussion and resolution of these issues. In taking ownership of the work of the Committee, members must take steps to ensure that they are empowered to take decisions on behalf of academic and managerial colleagues.
- 6.4 Are expected to be committed to communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University Community.

Version 7, 13 May 2014
Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services