

Executive Summary of Business for Doctoral School Board

Title	Annual Review of Terms of Reference
Status	Unrestricted
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Type	Discussion paper
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Summary of paper	As part of the Board's Annual Cycle of Business (see DSB/32/03) its terms of reference and membership will be reviewed at the start of each cycle of meetings. Presented here is a version of the document previously approved by the Board in June (DSB/31/1A), edited to bring terminology up-to-date following agreement that the term 'postgraduate researcher' or 'PGR' will be adopted moving forward (DSB/31/02), and confirmation that the Doctoral School will be rebranded to the 'Sussex Researcher School'. The membership has also been updated to reflect the move to thematically-focused PGR Representatives, as previously discussed and approved (DSB/31/1B).
Strategic context	n/a
Suggested reading	Original proposal for a restructure of PGR-focussed governance (DSB/29/2) and report on implementation (DSB/31/1A).
Classification	Internal use
Resource implications	n/a
Consultation	The revised terms of reference and membership of the Doctoral School Board (DSB) were endorsed by the Board on 27 June 2023 (DSB/31/1A). The version presented here reflects planned changes about in branding and terminology following consultation with the DSB membership, University Executive Team, and RaKE.
Future actions	Subject to the approval of the Board, the Board's name change will be tabled at Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee for approval as the parent committee, and then reported to Senate for information.
Recommendation	The Board is asked to NOTE the Board's terms of reference and membership, and to APPROVE that the Board be renamed the 'Postgraduate Researcher Board' going forward, to better reflect its remit and adopt terminology previously agreed (DSB/31/02).

Doctoral School Board

Annual Review of Terms of Reference

The Postgraduate Researcher Board (PGRB) is a sub-committee of Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (RaKE).

Terms of Reference

(a) To develop, implement, monitor, and keep under review the Sussex Researcher School's vision and Enabling Plan with respect to postgraduate researchers (PGRs), and ensure that these align with institutional priorities;

(b) To develop, implement, monitor, and keep under review the regulations, policies and procedures relating to PGRs, or – where such documents are owned by a different governing body (e.g. RaKE) – make recommendations for adjustments;

(c) To monitor and enhance the quality of research degree programmes and support, including:

(i) responsibility for programme approvals and an annual portfolio review, with a dotted reporting line into University Education Committee;

(ii) implementing a cycle of periodic reviews for PGR programmes, with a dotted reporting line into University Education Committee;

(iii) oversight of submission and completion rates, and other key metrics;

(iii) input into and approval of institutional partnership agreements which include PGR provision or support in any form, and;

(iv) promoting transparent and consistent decision-making in relation to PGRs.

(d) Via the PGRB's sub-committees, responsibility for:

(i) The realising of the institution's strategic objectives with respect to PGR recruitment and admissions, including widening participation in postgraduate research;

(ii) PGR funding, including: identifying strategic priorities; oversight of major training grants and (where relevant) their governing boards; the strategic dispersal of funds as allocated by Council or funders; and making the case for internal investment in support of PGRs;

(iii) PGR culture and wellbeing, including championing PGRs' contribution towards the institution's overall research culture and standing; identifying and promoting appropriate feedback mechanisms and considering the arising data; and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion;

(iv) Oversight of PGR training and development, including the design and delivery of institution-wide programmes of training, and employability;

(v) PGR academic progression and assessment, including the ratification of decisions made by the Research Degrees Progression & Award Board.

(e) To ensure the effective flow of information and feedback between all levels of the institutional governance relating to PGRs, from school-based Doctoral Studies Committees (DSC; or equivalent entities) to the PGRB, including receiving the minutes from DSCs and items of business formally escalated from schools, noting that such items may be delegated for consideration by the appropriate sub-committee.

(f) To monitor anonymised data relating to PGR appeals and investigations conducted under the *Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research* (where they relate to PGRs) in order to

identify trends and any onward actions which may be required¹.

(g) To monitor national and international developments in PGR provision and support in order to respond appropriately.

Membership of the PGRB

Ex officio:

- Dean of the Sussex Researcher School (Chair)
- Head of the Sussex Researcher School (Secretary)
- Director of Student Experience
- Academic Regulations Manager
- Chairs of the three sub-committees of the PGRB:
 - PGR Recruitment & Funding Sub-Committee
 - PGR Experience Sub-Committee
 - Research Degree Progression & Award Board
- Directors of Doctoral Studies of the Schools (including an IDS representative)
- USSU elected PGR part-time Officer

Elected:

- Two thematic PGR Representatives, one focussing on Quality Assurance, and another on Policy and Regulations

In attendance: A member of the Sussex Researcher School (Minute Secretary)

To note:

- The terms of elected offices will align with institutional practice and be capped at three years, and a maximum of two terms per individual.
- Delegates will not normally be permitted for one-off absences. Where an *ex officio* member of the PGRB is unable to attend on a regular basis, a formal delegate may be permitted by the Chair, in which case any voting rights will pass to the delegate.

¹ Given numbers are generally low, should the Chair deem a case identifiable from the data, the relevant item(s) will be considered under closed business, i.e. without the presence of student or student union representatives.