

SECTION 2: THE GUIDELINES

2 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

2.1 Governance

In the context of these guidelines, 'governance' refers to procedures in place to oversee all aspects of the provision of research degree programmes. Such procedures:

- are clearly described by means that are publicly and easily accessible
- involve representatives of those most closely involved, including research supervisors and research students and other research active staff intrinsic to the research environment and community
- involve objective competent persons (at least 2) in important decisions on research project approval, on student admission progress and assessment, and on risk assessment and risk mitigation associated with the context of research studies
- involve formal approval processes for all initial research proposals by the Academic Council/Committee, Doctoral School or Faculty Research Committee or other formal body or process
- take cognisance of evolving requirements related to ethics, research integrity, scientific reproducibility, commercial and legal sensitivities and matters such as intellectual property that impact on research projects following their conclusion
- apply across the provider where such procedures will add to the consistency of quality of research degrees while respecting the integrity of disciplines
- take cognisance of any potential conflicting requirements between those of external stakeholders and funding bodies and internal provider procedures
- have regard to the sustainability of research programmes within fields of learning

This system of governance may involve a specified senior officer (such as a head/dean of graduate studies) and a range of administrative structures (e.g. graduate research school or a postgraduate studies office).

QA procedures for governance include provision for circumstances where providers choose to act in cooperation with one or more other competent providers of research, to ensure adequate governance, comprehensive up-to-date policies and procedures, objective and informed decision-making, and necessary services and supports for administrators, supervisors and research students. The guidelines on governance, set out in the Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, also apply to the governance of research degrees and related services.

2.2 Resources and provisions

QA procedures for research provision for all research students include:

- supervision by a researcher/s, qualified at least at the level of the award, with demonstrated ability to make original contributions to the relevant field
- access to human, physical, academic, information, training and financial resources to sustainably support their research degree project, and facilitate its completion in accordance with high ethical and professional standards
- access to expert advice on legal and commercial matters such as intellectual property, as appropriate

2.3 Quality assurance, enhancement and improvement

The monitoring and improvement of the quality of research provision is recognised by the provider as a priority. A core priority of the monitoring procedures in place involves monitoring across the provider as a whole (cross-institutional monitoring). The quality assurance system for research degree programmes in the provider is coherent, integrated into the wider internal QA system with an overall institutional structure and approach to the quality assurance of research degrees. The system is an integral part of institutional research culture. The quality assurance procedures for research degree programmes:

- enable the achievement of those elements of the mission and objectives of the provider related to research degree programmes including academic and research integrity, and acceptable academic standards and effective processes
- consider risks that arise in the context of research provision. Procedures are developed to mitigate the range of risks identified and risks that may arise in the context of the research project. Such risks may be varied and include fraud, malpractice and plagiarism; difficulties with funding of projects; issues with inadequate supervision; a disconnect with research partners or a breakdown of working relationships; complications with employment-related research projects; student and staff wellbeing.

Procedures are in place to allow all those concerned with research degree programmes to make themselves fully aware of the relevant quality assurance procedures.

Documentation is integrated reflecting a comprehensive record of all QA procedures for research degrees and related services. Procedures are available and accessible to all concerned.

For quality improvement, enhancement and evaluation purposes, due consideration is given to all feedback and self-monitoring processes, relevant data and statistics, and the findings of internally and externally initiated evaluations for research degree programmes and related services.

The procedures provide for opportunities for research students and graduates to give feedback on their experience and evaluate the effectiveness of the supporting procedures.