

FINAL: School Research and Innovation Committee Terms of Reference

First principles: why are we here, and what is our purpose?

1. To support the School implementation of the University's Strategic Vision for research and innovation.
2. To facilitate an excellent research culture in the School.
3. To ensure the generation of high quality research outputs and innovation, knowledge exchange and impact of reach and significance enabled by a portfolio of externally funded projects.
4. To ensure the recruitment of a high quality and diverse PGR cohort, enhanced by external studentship funding, and ensuring they have a consistently excellent experience and positive outcomes.
5. To have oversight, and ensure the implementation, of the School's contribution to the University's REF submission.
6. To have oversight, and ensure the implementation, of the School's contribution to the University's translational innovation, commercialisation, and regional activities and key partnerships underpinning them.
7. To understand, manage and mitigate the potential risks, including to our reputation, arising from our research, innovation, and knowledge exchange activities.

The compliance responsibilities of the Committee

Ensuring that the School's research and innovation portfolio and PGR experience are delivered in a way which is compliant with relevant University policies, professional regulation, and legislation, including:

- University policies relating to research and innovation, including ethics, data protection, open research, research integrity, IP and commercialisation.
- The University's Good Practice in Research and Innovation Policy (GRIP).
- University policies relating to PGR recruitment, progression, assessment, support, and outcomes.
- UK legislation and policies relating to research and innovation.
- The conditions attached to the award of grant funding from external funding bodies (including for PGR studentships),
- Office for Students registration requirements and thresholds for outcomes for PGRs.
- The conditions attached to research, innovation and PGR partnerships and collaborations.
- Any research, innovation or PGR requirements relating to the accreditation of the School by external bodies.
- Fairness, including ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion, in processes relating to the assessment of research and innovation quality, including for internal and external funding opportunities and REF submissions.

Terms of Reference

1. Ensure the School's research, innovation and PGR activity is aligned to the University's Research and Innovation Vision and Strategy and to the continuous improvement of all research, innovation and PGR activities in the School.
2. Ensure that all the School's research, innovation and PGR activity is compliant with relevant external regulatory conditions, legislation, funders and accrediting bodies' requirements.
3. Ensure that all staff engaged in conducting or supporting research, innovation and PGR activities are enabled to achieve excellence, through promoting and ensuring an excellent research culture in the School, aligned with the University's research culture strategy and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.
4. Ensure that the School's research, innovation and PGR activities are enabled through an appropriate level of external grant funding.
5. Ensure that all of the School's research, innovation and PGR activities are compliant with the University's Good Research and Innovation Practice policies.
6. Ensure that all PGRs have an excellent experience and outcomes, that appropriate mechanisms are in place to engage with the PGR voice, and that the School is compliant with Office for Students (OfS) registration requirements and exceeds the OfS baseline thresholds for PGR outcomes.
7. Promote and protect freedom of speech and academic freedom across all research, innovation and PGR activities in line with the University's Code of Practice.
8. Ensure that all of the School's research, innovation and PGR activities are aligned with the University's Sustainability Strategy and action plan.
9. Ensure effective collaboration with the School's Education and One University Committees

Core Membership

School Director of Research and Innovation (Chair)

Deputy School Directors of Research and Innovation (where appropriate)

School PGR Lead

School Knowledge Exchange Lead

School Director of One University / Head of EDI as appropriate

School Ethics Lead

School REF Lead

PGR representatives*

In addition, the School should ensure representation of Early Career Researchers, Established Researchers and, where appropriate, technicians, on the Committee.

*There may be some items of Committee business where it is not appropriate for PGRs to be in attendance.

What are the expectations of members?

Guidance and training to support members will be provided centrally.

- Understanding the University of Sheffield's research and innovation pillars of the Vision and its relevance to enhancing the School's research and innovation portfolio

- An understanding of and commitment to delivering research and innovation excellence (and securing external funding to enable these), a high-quality PGR experience and an excellent research culture, aligned with School, Faculty and University strategies
- Engagement with key data sets to drive enhancement and provide academic assurance
- An understanding of relevant University regulations, policies, and processes and, where appropriate, a broader understanding of external funding and accreditation bodies' regulations and requirements.

The capacity in which members are appointed and their individual purpose and responsibility on the Committee

Accountability for research, innovation, research culture and PGRs within the School rests with the Head of School and School Executive Board.

Membership of the Committee is for the purposes of effective governance of the School's research, innovation, research culture and PGR portfolio. Members should act in the University's best interest and prioritise the academic standards of the School as they contribute to the overall delivery of the University's research and innovation strategy.

The reporting lines required of the Committee and to whom assurance should be provided

The reporting routes are two-fold:

The School Research and Innovation Committee reports to the School Executive Board on the fulfilment of its responsibilities; to appraise of key data, levels of regulatory and funder compliance and to make recommendations for action. Accountability sits with the Head of School and School Executive Board.

The School Research and Innovation Committee also provides evidence-based academic assurance and robust recommendations through the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee. Faculties are responsible for overseeing that Schools discharge their accountabilities. The Faculty Research and Innovation Committee reports to the Senate Research and Innovation Committee.

What communications cascade is the Committee responsible for, and to whom?

- The Committee is responsible for agreeing with the School Executive Board, and delivering the communication of decisions to the School, including to professional services staff supporting programme delivery.
- Where there are interdependencies with other School portfolios, communication to relevant committees and/or working groups also rests with the Committee Chair and/or Secretary.

What is the annual cycle of business, schedule of meetings, and standing agenda items?

Interlinked with Faculty and Senate Research and Innovation Committee's calendar of business the standard cycle of business will include:

- Compliance with University research, innovation, research culture and PGR policies and procedures and ensuring knowledge and implementation of new or revised policies.

- Compliance with Office for Students registration and baseline outcomes thresholds for PGRs.
- Compliance with external funders' regulations and outcome expectations.
- Oversight of delivery of School 5-year plans and updated annual action plans for research, innovation, research culture and PGR programmes.
- Engagement with annual planning round processes relating to research, innovation, and PGR programmes.
- Review of the portfolio of funded research and innovation projects and PGR studentships, including volume, diversity, and performance trends and the School mechanisms deployed to support grant funding applications, including engagement with research, knowledge exchange and PGR support teams aligned with the School.
- Oversight of the School's/ UoA's implementation of and submission to annual REF stocktake processes (outputs, impact case studies and people, culture, and environment) and the implementation of fairness intention plans.
- Compliance and engagement with faculty and university funding processes, including for PGR studentships, internal funding such as HEIF, IAA and research culture and demand management procedures, when applied, for external research funding calls.
- Engagement with annual PGR Quality Assurance processes.
- Insight and actions from PGR survey data.

Sub-committees

It will be for Schools to determine the appropriate configuration and structure of any sub-committees.

Any sub-committees should have a clear purpose, terms of reference and remit and operate under the direction of the parent committee and be approved and have terms of reference and membership agreed by the School Executive.

John Flint

Deputy Vice President - Research

Updated 30 July 2026