Remit and Membership
The Postgraduate Research Committee (PGRC) has its own website at: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/teaching/committees/pgresearchcommittee/ The website features agendas, minutes and reports and is updated following each meeting. Information on the activities of short-life Working Groups will be made available electronically to ensure that members are kept informed and can contribute to specific developments. Student representatives serve as full members and are eligible to vote.

Events/Working Groups
The PGRC plays a key role in implementing the academic and supporting strategies but much of this activity is delegated. There are three main forms of devolved activity:

- Fora: ongoing groups with the function of identifying and disseminating best practice; considering issues highlighted by the Vice-Principal (Proctor). Current fora include the Academic Forum and lunches for Directors of Postgraduate Studies.

- Short-Life Working Groups: usually with a relatively small number of members tasked on behalf of the Vice-Principal (Proctor) to develop policies and/or implementation plans in areas of significant strategic importance, eg recommendations from the 2015 QAA Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR). The remit, timetables and reporting mechanisms are determined by the Vice-Principal (Proctor).

- Projects: activity related to a specific target with one of the strategic themes, usually taken forward by an individual or group on behalf of the University. The remit, timetables and reporting mechanisms are determined by the Vice-Principal (Proctor).

Academic Business Committee
The Academic Business Committee facilitates and supports the business of the PGRC by drafting papers, agreeing the agenda, proposing an annual schedule of business and coordinating the implementation of new policies approved at PGRC. The full remit and membership for this Committee can be found at: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/teaching/committees/

Notice of Meetings
The PGRC meets five times per academic year and will be aligned with the meeting dates for Academic Council. A schedule of meetings for each academic year is issued in May/June of the previous session. Meetings are usually scheduled for 2 hours (2pm-4pm) but may run over if more detailed discussion of particular items is required. Tea and coffee is available from 1.30pm to give members the opportunity to network with colleagues in advance of each meeting.

The meeting dates for 2016-17 are as follows (all meetings will be held in Parliament Hall):

Wed 12 Oct 16
Wed 26 Nov 16
Wed 8 Feb 17
Wed 12 Apr 17
Tues 2 May 17
Typical Meeting Structure

The order of business at each PGRC meeting typically proceeds in the following order:-

- Welcome and Apologies
- Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- Matters Arising
- Items of Strategy & Policy
- Papers for Information [including Proctor’s Update]
- PGR Developments in Schools
- Next Meeting: Date and Key Items

There is usually no discussion on the ‘Papers for Information’ and there is no ‘Any Other Competent Business’. Items being proposed by someone other than a PGRC member will be brought to the top of the agenda so that the proposer does not need to remain for the duration of the entire meeting. On occasion, meetings may be preceded by a presentation on a particular topic which may be of interest to members.

The main focus of business for the PGRC in 2016-17 will be:-

- Progress Review
- Fieldwork
- Length of Study
- Re-Registration
- PGR HEAR

Agenda and Papers

Agenda items considered by the PGRC are a combination of University-level issues and issues raised by Schools, Units and students. Major items are identified as far as possible in advance with the schedule of key activities being considered by the PGRC at the first meeting of the year. The agenda for each meeting highlights the main items for consideration at the subsequent meeting.

Although slots on the agenda will always be available for issues to be raised by Schools, Units and students, most of the agenda is usually given over to institutional matters relating to the academic and/or supporting strategies or items identified by the Academic Business Committee.

Notifying Agenda Items

The agenda is typically set three weeks in advance of each meeting; possible items should be notified to the Clerk prior to this date. Items notified to the Clerk ten days or less before the meeting will be included on the agenda only with the prior agreement of the Convenor; otherwise, they will be held over until the next meeting.

The Convenor and the Clerk will determine whether notified items are matters for the PGRC or for another group (typically the Academic Monitoring Group).

Members are requested to identify all matters to the Clerk in advance of the meeting, including any urgent, last minute issues, in preference to tabling papers or raising matters not previously notified to the Clerk.

Preparation of Papers

Papers are prepared by the Convenor and the Clerk in conjunction with other members of the PGRC or individuals outwith the PGRC as appropriate.
PGRC members, or other colleagues, who would like to present a paper to the PGRC for consideration should contact the Clerk in the first instance. The Clerk will liaise with the Convenor to determine whether or not the paper should be forwarded to PGRC for consideration. If the paper is accepted the Clerk will advise on details such as the meeting at which the paper will be considered and the format of the paper. Proposers of papers will be invited to introduce their paper at the meeting.

Circulation of agenda and papers
The agenda and papers are circulated two weeks in advance of each meeting. Additional circulations, typically including ‘to follow’ papers are kept to a minimum, but on some occasions are unavoidable. Strategic or significantly important papers will not be “to follow”.

Voting and Decision-Making
PGRC may discuss matters on which there is no clear agreement. On matters requiring a decision, the PGRC will operate on the basis of a broad consensus. If there is no clear consensus the Convenor will decide whether a vote should be taken or the issue is deferred to a subsequent meeting for further, more detailed discussion.

When an item requires a decision outwith a scheduled meeting, the Convenor will determine the decision to be taken and if possible will do so in consultation with members of the PGRC. Any decision taken will be notified to the next meeting.

Substitute Attendance
Members who are unable to attend a meeting of the PGRC should notify the Clerk in advance and should nominate a substitute to attend in their place. Members and their substitutes should discuss any items requiring a collective view in advance of the meeting so that the substitute can respond on behalf of the School or Unit. In the absence of the Convenor, the Provost or one of the Deans will undertake the role.

Quorum
The quorum of the PGRC is 50% of the membership (excluding those “in attendance”). Co-opted members are not included in the quorum.

Reporting to Academic Council and Court

Academic Council
The minute from the PGRC is sent to Academic Council usually for information only although Academic Council can raise any matter for discussion at the meeting. Any substantial changes to policies and/or Senate Regulations require Academic Council approval.

Each Academic Council meeting features an item for discussion. Topics are based on matters of concern to the University as a whole are determined by the Senate Business Committee in advance. This can include discussion on postgraduate research issues. Views emerging from this will be fed back to the PGRC.

Court
Policy issues relating to postgraduate research students are not normally discussed at Court however it does consider the Annual Institutional Statement of Internal Subject Review required by the Scottish Funding Council and must approve the Statement prior to submission. Monitoring of learning and teaching and postgraduate research provision is overseen by the Academic Assurance Group which reports annually to the Audit & Risk Committee.

Reporting to Schools, Units and Students
Discussions and decisions relating to the PGRC meetings must be reported to Schools, Units and students. Such reporting is the responsibility of the representatives on the PGRC. All PGRC decisions and discussions should be communicated widely: paperwork and outcomes of debates are very rarely identified as confidential. Following each PGRC meeting, the Clerk will liaise with the
Academic Business Committee regarding the information which may have to be communicated more widely across the University.

Each Director of Postgraduate Studies should ensure that his or her Head of School is informed of pertinent issues and decisions so that the Head of School can in turn contribute to Academic Council discussions of these matters. Heads of Units should ensure that colleagues are properly informed.

**Reporting to the PGRC**

Members are responsible for circulating PGRC papers within their Schools and Units as appropriate and for ensuring that the responses communicated at the meeting are representative of the shared view of those consulted not the personal opinion of the individual PGRC member.

**Participation in Working Groups, Projects and Fora**

Much of PGRC’s work is now taken forward by Working Groups. PGRC members are encouraged to invite their colleagues to participate in the activities therefore providing a wide spectrum of views and experiences. PGRC members will be regularly updated on the issues being considered by the Working Groups and advised of the timescales for being able to input into the discussions.

**Other Committees/Groups**

Within the University, there are other groups whose functions are related to research postgraduate issues and the student experience, eg the Academic Monitoring Group and the Service Directors’ Group (Student Experience). The PGRC engages with both of these groups, the links between the PGRC and these groups being facilitated by joint membership.

**Annual Timetable**

At the first meeting of the year, a PGRC review report is produced which summarises the key activities and achievements of the previous session. The report also identifies the key strategic issues to be considered by the PGRC in the forthcoming session, together with targets and timescales.

**Key contacts**

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Convenor of the Postgraduate Research Committee  
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Emmy Feamster  
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Clerk to the Postgraduate Research Committee  
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Emily Feamster  
Postgraduate Administrative Officer  
Proctor’s Office  

21 September 2016