FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (F-EMS)

Terms of Reference (TOR) for F-EMS Discipline-Specific Scientific Committees

1 Establishment

In the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences a Scientific Committee is a discipline-specific committee established within the Faculty. The establishment and re-organisation of Scientific Committees must be approved by the Research and Innovation Committee and its Terms of Reference (ToR) approved at Faculty Board.

2 Functions

The main functions of the committee include the following:

- **evaluate and approve** master's and PhD student research **proposals** before submission to the Ethics and Higher Degrees Committees as needed.
- **evaluate** the applications of **school/entity/staff research projects** before submission for ethics approval as needed.
- **discuss and/or evaluate** the application of **external funding proposals (e.g. NRF projects)** before submission to the relevant research office when needed.
- **recommend** the appointment of **examiners** before submission to the relevant Higher Degrees Committee as needed.
- **appraise and recommend** the ethical risk level of research projects/proposals **before** submission to the applicable Ethics Committee as needed.
- **oversee and/or schedule** colloquiums as required.
- **monitor** the progress of students through the acceptance of progress reports
- **make recommendations** for warnings, termination or other related matters to the Higher Degrees Committee) (If applicable).

3 Membership and processes

The membership of a committee will comprise staff from the Faculty and should be based on the following guidelines below, taking into consideration that certain disciplines may have unique requirements. However, even given unique requirements a Scientific Committee should operate as close as is practically possible within the guidelines presented:

3.1 Scientific Committee Members:

- A Scientific Committee should consist of a School Director or his/her designate, at least one Research Director and a **minimum of six** members with representation from all three campuses (where applicable).
- The chairperson should be nominated and appointed from the membership of the committee. But should ideally be a research director, school director or research/sub programme leader where possible.
- At least **two** members of the committee should **hold a PhD** in the relevant discipline.
- The knowledge and expertise of members should be diverse (discipline experts, methodology experts—quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method designs) to ensure broad and quality input for proposals and projects.
- At least **three** members, including the chairperson should have completed F-EMS **ethics training.**
- Co-opted members, observers and visitors: The committee may co-opt members when needed, invite observers and visitors.

4 Meetings of the Scientific Committee

- The committee will meet on pre-scheduled times which should align with the faculty calendar.
- There should ideally be meetings throughout the year (February to November). The Chairperson can direct the number of meetings per year in line with the Faculty calendar to ensure optimal opportunity for students/staff to get approval for their studies/research.
- Extra-ordinary meetings can be scheduled by the committee chair as required.
- Meetings should ideally be scheduled before the Ethics Committee and Higher Degrees meetings so that students/staff have ample time to amend the changes for submission for approval.
- A quorum will be established if at least sixty per cent (60%) of the members are in attendance for the meeting to take decisions and to make recommendations.
- Meetings will take place face-to-face or virtually dependant on the need of the committee.
- Coordinators/students/study leaders/promoters will present their projects for discussion, evaluation, appraisal and/or recommendation for approval.
- All decisions of the meeting will be minuted and filed for record-keeping.
- Before a meeting the Chair, or an administrative designate, will distribute a meeting agenda which should include the proposals/projects and other matters that will serve at least four days before the meeting.

4.1 Scientific Meeting Activities

4.1.1 Before Meeting

- Supervisor/promoter/project leader submit the proposal and ethics application (where applicable) to the office of the Chairperson of the committee.

- The proposals and ethics applications will be distributed to all committee members with a review form where applicable. The Chairperson can assign a specific number of reviewers to specific proposals, when and where required, before the meeting.
- The chair (or designated person) will schedule the meeting with an agenda attached of the proposal/projects and ethics applications (where applicable) to be discussed.
- Before the meeting commences the previous meeting's minutes need to be approved.

4.1.2 The Meeting Agenda

- The format of the meeting is determined before the meeting takes place as required.
- The chairperson opens the meeting and establishes, with the verbal support of members present (if applicable), whether a quorum exists in order to proceed with the meeting. If not, the meeting is postponed until a valid quorum is established.
- Personalia.
- Matters arising from previous minutes (if applicable)
- Approval of previous meeting's minutes.
- Special requests / New matters (if applicable - for approval/rejection by the Chairperson).
- Agenda
  - Student and project proposals – e.g. presentation if required/applicable.
  - Questions are posed by members to the student/researcher(s)/study leader/promoter for clarification – if applicable.
  - If a face-to-face presentation format is used by the Scientific Committee for proposals, student(s) is/are asked to leave the meeting while committee deliberates on the viability and scientific quality of the proposed research project/proposal. If the Chairperson is the supervisor / researcher, the deputy will chair the specific item of the meeting.
  - Committee makes a final recommendation by consensus or a 75% majority if no consensus exists (see Voting rights of members' point 4.2 below).
  - If approved, supervisor(s)/promoter(s) are sent for noting and also recommendations for examiners to the applicable Higher Degrees Committee.
  - If a face-to-face presentation was used, student(s) / supervisor(s) are called back into the meeting and the chairperson provides the decision as well as any recommendations as discussed during the deliberations.
  - If another process is followed that does not use the presentation format, an official letter from the committee should communicate the decision to the supervisor(s)
    - Final decision options:
      - Accept without revisions.
      - Accept with revisions under guidance of supervisor(s)/promoter(s).
      - Revisions for round robin.
      - Major revision (Resubmit to committee process after revisions).
      - Reject (Study not viable - back to the drawing board).

- Student matters (Recommendations for warnings, termination or other related matters to the Higher Degrees Committee) (If applicable).
- General comments on research-related matters or reflections on the meeting (if applicable).
- Closing by Chairperson.

4.1.3 Actions After meeting

- Supervisor/promoter or project leader will then submit the necessary documentation to the applicable administrative structure/person or the Higher Degrees Office or Ethics Office for discussion and/or evaluation/approval, this should be signed-off by the chairperson.

4.2 Voting Rights of Members

Matters are usually decided by means of consensus. However, all members have voting rights (including the supervisor(s)/promoter(s)), except where the supervisor(s)/promoter(s) make up most of the meeting's quorum. Co-opted members, observers and visitors will not have any voting rights. In the case of a voting tie, the Chairperson will have the deciding vote on any matter. The Chairperson may decide when consensus is not apparent that a decision should be taken by means of a vote (75% or above). When a round-robin format is used/decision needed a simple majority of members is acceptable.

4.3 Points of order

A point of order, clarification or information may be raised against any member in line with the terms of reference, in which instance the Chairperson will make a ruling. Should the ruling on the above point of order, clarification or information be immediately challenged by a member, the ruling is put to the meeting for determination – without it being discussed, and the decision of the meeting (75% vote or above) is final.

4.4 Disorderly Conduct / Calling Members to Order

Anyone attending a committee meeting who, after having been requested by the Chairperson to come to order or to refrain from disrespectful and/or disorderly conduct, continues to disobey a ruling from the Chairperson, will be requested to leave the meeting immediately. No points of order may be brought when a Chairperson has made this ruling. Such an event must be minuted and brought to the attention of the Deputy Dean Research and Innovation for further investigation in terms of the seriousness of the conduct. Any member may request the Chairperson to call another member to order, and the Chairperson's judgement in this regard is final.

5. Minutes and Recording

- The Chairperson must ensure that accurate minutes are kept of meetings and filed.
- Recording of the meeting is recommended, but not compulsory. If recorded, the only instance when the recorder may be paused is during the deliberations and should be unpaused during

the final decision and recommendations. The reason for the pause during deliberations is so that all relevant parties can receive an unedited version of the meeting in order to make improvements and for all members to be able to give their recommendations openly and freely to deliberate in the committee.

6 Reporting

Authority

The Scientific Committee reports to the Higher Degrees Committees and functions under the authority of the Research and Innovation Committee providing information and recommendations to these committees as and when required.

Approval and Review

The following documents guide the operations of this committee:

- NWU academic Rules (A-rules)
- Examination guidelines
- Postgraduate manual
- Quality manual