

UCT FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES POSTGRADUATE STUDENT OVERSIGHT AND ADVOCACY TASK TEAM

1. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT AND ADVOCACY TASK TEAM

During the student protests in 2016, the Postgraduate Health Science Students Council (PGHSSC) presented the Deanery with a list of issues affecting postgraduate students. At the request of the PGHSSC and the Deputy Dean of Research, an *ad hoc* advisory committee was created to assist the postgraduate students in ensuring their issues were addressed. This led to the establishment of the UCT Faculty of Health Science Postgraduate Student Oversight and Advocacy Task Team (FHSPG TT). The aim of the FHSPG TT, which will be comprised of members of UCT staff, postdoctoral fellows, and the PGHSSC, is to provide an oversight and reporting structure to ensure transparency and accountability.

1.1 Mandate

It is expected that the FHSPG TT will be recognised within Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) structures as a body whose mandate is to engage with FHS committees and management – including, but not limited to, those under the portfolio of the DD Postgraduate Education – at the request of, and on behalf of, the PGHSSC in order to improve the working environment of postgraduate students across different departments and divisions in the Faculty. The expectation at the outset is that the FHSPG TT is temporary, and will be dissolved once the PGHSSC determines that structures, processes and relationships within the FHS have been sufficiently altered to ensure that the issues of postgraduate students are adequately represented without the need for the FHSPG TT. Therefore, no tenure can be set, but will be reviewed periodically to ensure that the FHSPG TT retains relevance; if not, it will be dissolved.

The FHSPG TT will act in the following capacities:

1. As **facilitator** between the FHS committee and management structure to suggest solutions or methods of implementation to FHS, and to return feedback on progress or recommendations made by the FHS committees to PGHSSC. In this way, the PGTT will enable frank and transparent communication between the PGHSSC and the FHS while mitigating concerns of student victimisation.
2. Through sub-committees may act as an **advocacy group** for the postgraduate student body under the directives of the PGHSSC, acting as their advisors in addition to providing a formal means of communication between the student body and FHS structures.
3. Ensure the requests of the PGHSSC are communicated clearly to the FHS structures and to follow up such matters to confirm they are duly executed and, if this is not possible, that the reasoning behind non-execution is given. The PGTT will communicate deadlines and monitor progress and **hold the relevant structures to account**.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The FHSPG TT will deal with sensitive concerns and issues: therefore, confidentiality will be maintained and written communication must not be disseminated beyond the Task Team.

The FHSPG TT represents a coalescence of members of the Academic body, and functions to handle concerns and issues facing postgraduate students in FHS that are brought to the attention of the FHSPG TT by the PGHSSC. The FHSPG TT will organise into several sub-committees/working groups that will work towards addressing specific concerns and issues. These include, but are not limited to: Services and general issues; Student Supervisor relationships; Academic and admin issues; Issues external to FHS; Suggestions for FHS.

2.1 Membership

The initial members of the FHSPG TT consist of staff, postdoctoral fellows, and students who have responded voluntarily to the call sent out by the Deanery in 2016. All members have made the commitment to address and solve the issues raised by the PGHSSC and, as such, are expected to participate actively in the mini task teams. Members should familiarise themselves with the processes and structures within FHS to ensure their ability to pursue all postgraduate issues appropriately. Members of the FHSPG TT will not be held accountable if they are no longer able to participate in the task team; however, members are requested to (1) notify the task team members, in writing, of this decision and (2) if possible, find another volunteer to replace said member. It is understood that membership of the FHSPG TT is fluid and members may join at any time.

PGHSSC members who will automatically form part of the FHSPG TT are

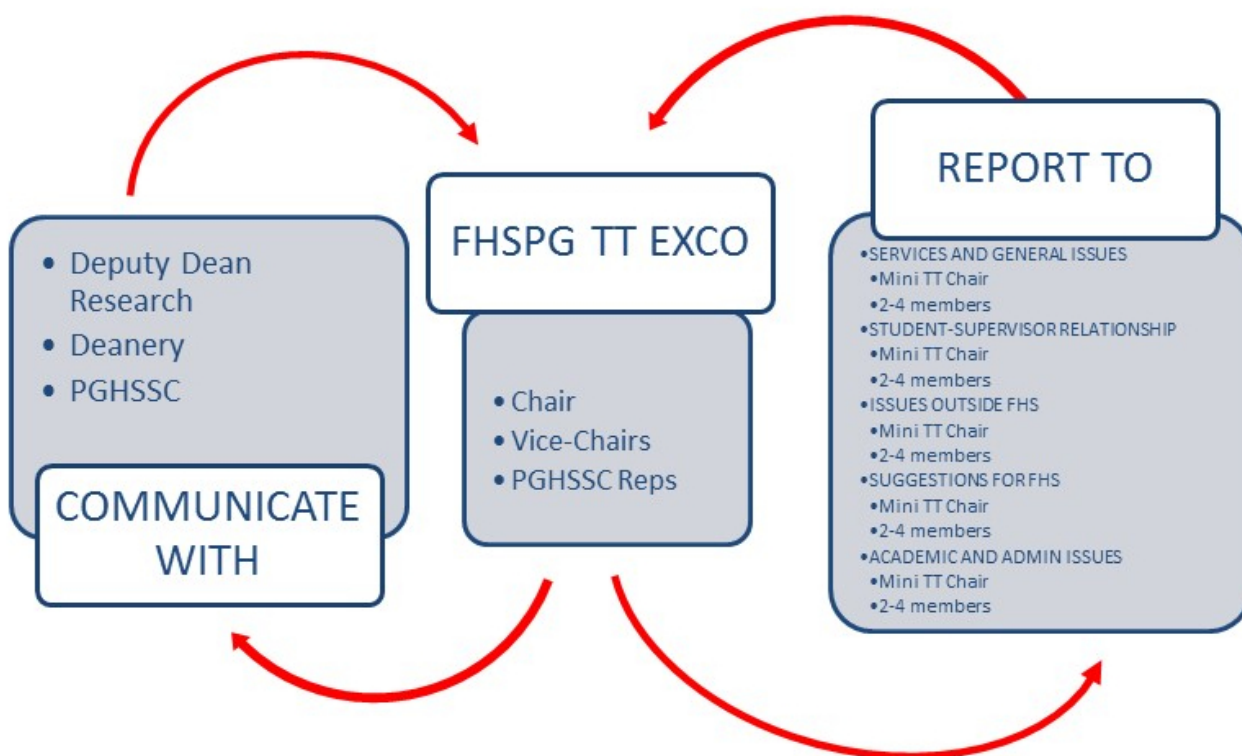
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- A representative from each of the following Portfolios:
 - Task Team portfolio
 - International Students
 - Transformation
 - Registrar

Additional Students will be called upon to volunteer for consultation, engagement and participation as required. These individuals will be recruited through the PGHSSC.

Where certain expertise is required to assess a proposal, the FHSPG TT may consult with non-task team members.

2.2 Governance

At the directive of the PGHSSC, the FHSPG TT will be staff driven; therefore, the team will be led by Co-Chairs nominated by the FHSPG TT. These individuals, together with a sub-committee of members from the EXCO, will communicate directly with the Deanery on behalf of the task team. The FHSPG TT will strive to reach all decisions by consensus and will notify the PGHSSC if there are irreconcilable differences within the team that will affect its functioning. Any lack of clarity or precision in the communications from the PGHSSC will be referred to the PGHSSC for clarification.



	Person fulfilling role in 2017
Chairperson	Professor Muazzam Jacobs
Vice Chairpersons	Associate Professor Digby Warner
	Dr. Victoria Gibbon
PGHSSC Representative	Prisca Osiki
	Khanyisile Kgoadi
Executive Members will be chairpersons of the following portfolios:	
Services and general issues	Mrs. Baheya Najaar
Student-supervisor relationships	Dr. Maia Lesosky
Issues outside FHS	Dr. Hlumani Ndlovu
Suggestions for FHS	Dr. Alison Swartz
Academic and admin issues	Dr. Anna Coussens

2.3 Meetings and Communication

Minutes: Will be detailed but no names or examples or anecdotes will be recorded. Minutes will be circulated among task team members and approved at the next meeting prior to circulation beyond FHSPG TT. If circulation beyond the task team is approved by the Chairs and FHSPG TT, then an abbreviated and focused set will be prepared and disseminated accordingly.

Communication with Deanery: The Chairpersons of the FHSPG TT will meet regularly with the DD Postgraduate Education and, when emailing documents the Dean and FHSPG, TT EXCO will be cc'd in. The Chairperson of the FHSPG TT will hold a seat on the Faculty of Health Sciences Postgraduate Education Executive Committee.