

Meeting 1/2025

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** will be held from 3:07 pm - 4:00 pm, Thursday, 20 February 2025 in the MGA Meeting Room, Caulfield Campus and by Zoom.

MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 3:07pm.

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

The MGAEC President acknowledged and paid respect to the people of the Kulin nations as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this unceded land.

1.2 Attendance & Apologies

Present: Saham Hettiarachchi, Vu Hiep Dang (Oliver), Mohammed Salehan (Zeehan), Dhanya Menoth Mohan, Yiwen Yuan, Yidi Luan, Beauty Nalwendo, Jeremy Salcedo, Calvin Chow (departed 3:36), Tuhar Yeasmin (arrived 3:13), Karan Raman (arrived 3:15), Ummatul Siddique (arrived 3:47).

Apologies: Neharika Shah

In attendance: Janice Boey, Executive Officer
Charlie Li, HR & Finance Manager
Ying Xu, Advocacy Manager
Shinyi Chin, Marketing & Communications Manager
Leilani Hatfield, Events Manager (arrived 3:30)
Ryan Edwards, Research Manager

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

Item 4.2.10 regarding HDR stipends was added to the agenda by the Executive Officer, Janice Boey.

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of meeting 11/2024 December for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of MGAEC meeting December 11/2024 be confirmed.

Moved: Saham Hettiarachchi

Seconded: Mohammed Salehan (Zeehan)

Carried with no objections.

2.2 Minutes of the Special Meeting January for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of the MGAEC Special Meeting January 2025 are confirmed.

Moved: Saham Hettiarachchi

Seconded: Dhanya Menoth Mohan

Carried with no objections.

2.3 Action sheet

The action sheet was noted.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

The President's report was noted.

Yiwen spoke to her report and discussed the meetings she had attended. In particular, in the Central SSAF Meeting, the issue of requesting the University to provide hotdesk bundles for the HDR Writing Room was denied at first due to being considered as an academic item. However, the MGA has emphasised the initiative as a means to promote student health and wellbeing, and the matter is under discussion for final approval.

3.2 Members' reports

Members' reports were noted.

Saham spoke to the Postgraduate Publication Award being revoked by the University, and the understanding that while the relevant funding will be redirected elsewhere, it is currently unclear where the funding will be used. It is anticipated that the funding will be directed to the new PD program for research students.

3.3 Staff report

The staff report was noted.

3.4 December 2024 & January 2025 profit and loss report

The December 2024 & January 2025 profit and loss report was noted. Charlie spoke to the report. Additionally, he noted that the 2024 MGA Audit has commenced and should be completed in a couple of months for the MGAEC to review.

3.5 December 2024 & January 2025 MGA Newsletters & Social Media Report

The Newsletters and Social Media Report was noted. Yiwen noted that there were minimal social media posts made during this period due to the University and MGA's close down across the December and January holiday period.

3.6 December 2024 & January 2025 Advocacy Report

The Advocacy Report was noted. Ying spoke to the report and noted the upcoming soft launch and testing of the MGA's migration advice service - Migration Support Hub - ahead of a formal launch. Ying also noted that there was a low number of welfare program

applications in January, possibly due to students not being actively studying, or travelling during the holiday period.

3.7 MGAEC meeting attendance records

The MGAEC meeting attendance records were noted as true and accurate.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 CAPA Update

The MGA noted the CAPA's rejection of MGA's offer of \$10,000 as the reaffiliation fee for 2025. Calvin confirmed that the MGA had followed up with CAPA confirming that no further funds can be offered, and that the MGA has not received a response from CAPA at this point in time.

4.1.2 Returning Officer Update

A potential conflict of interest matter relating to the Returning Officer was discussed by the MGAEC concerning an assistant to the Returning Officer who is studying as a graduate student at Deakin University. The MGAEC has confirmed that as per the relevant MGA regulations that there are no restrictions on the assistant being a graduate student, provided that the Returning Officer is not a graduate student themselves. As the Returning Officer in this case is not a graduate student, the MGAEC has determined that there is no issue with the assistant being a graduate student at a different university.

4.1.3 Bank Account for Migration Support Hub

Jan spoke to the item and noted that the bank account is for the purpose of ensuring that the MGA will abide by financial management requirements under the Migration Agent Code of Conduct.

It is moved:

That the committee approve the establishment of a new transactional bank account for the Migration Support Hub service, in accordance with the requirements of the Migration Agency Code of Conduct.

Moved: Saham Hettiarachchi
Seconded: Vu Hiep Dang (Oliver)

Carried with no objections.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 Conflict of Interest Regulations

Yiwen spoke to the proposed updates to the MGA Conflict of Interest Regulations, and its expansion to also include staff to improve MGA governance and transparency.

It is moved:

That the updated MGA Conflict of Interest Regulations be accepted.

Moved: Karan Raman

Seconded: Dhanya Menoth Mohan

Carried with no objections.

4.2.2 MGA HDR Satisfaction report

The report was noted. Ryan spoke to the report and commented on the positive results and improvements to the HDR experience at Monash. However, an area identified for improvement is career guidance and better access to career counsellors specialising in the PhD space - someone with the experience to assist students identify how their skills can translate beyond the field of academia. Professional development was another area identified to have lower satisfaction. Each faculty has specific areas where students wish to see improvement, such as research skills, data analysis techniques, etc. Yiwen noted that facilities and resources were also identified as needing improvement.

4.2.3 Indigenous Writing Retreat Funding

Jan spoke to the history of the retreat and MGA's historical funding of the initiative. As the MGA has not been successful in securing an indigenous officer, the funding has been an effective way for the MGA to support indigenous Monash graduate students.

It is moved:

That the MGAEC approve funding of \$4,000 from the OB budgets for the 2025 HDR writing retreat for Indigenous graduate students, organised in collaboration with Dr. Cammi Murrup-Stewart from the Gukwonderuk Indigenous Health Workforce Centre.

Mover: Mohammed Salehan (Zeehan)

Secunder: Beauty Nalwendo

Carried with no objections.

4.2.4 Respect at Monash Committee vacancy

Yiwen spoke to the background of the committee and asked for an expression of interest.

Yidi expressed interest in the position as the Women's Officer. The MGAEC confirmed that Yidi will be nominated for the vacancy. Ryan will get in contact with Yidi with regards to the student representative position.

4.2.5 GRC Steering Committee vacancy

Yiwen spoke to the background of the committee and asked for an expression of interest from HDR students on the MGAEC.

Zeehan expressed interest in the position. Ryan noted that he has not had any applicants and confirmed that the Committee requested a nominee from the MGAEC.

The MGAEC confirmed that Zeehan will be nominated for the vacancy. Ryan will get in contact with Yidi with regards to the student representative position

4.2.6 New signatory for PPA Bank Account

Approval was required for the new incoming PPA treasurer to access the PPA bank account. Charlie explained that the bank account is owned by MGA, and that one staff member and one student is required for approval of payments. This year, additional PPA signatories will be added to ensure that there is a back up should the current PPA treasurer go on leave.

It is moved:

That the signatories to the PPA Westpac Bank Account (BSB: 033 289, Acc:361 640) shall be:

Position	Current Incumbent	Type
PPA Treasurer	Zi Xing Mun	Student
PPA Vice President	Abbey Muller	Student
Executive Officer	Janice Boey	Staff
HR & Finance Manager	Charlie Li	Staff

Moved: Yidi Luan

Seconded: Saham Hettiarachchi

Carried with no objections.

4.2.7 AGM Motions

The Committee noted that motions for the upcoming AGM will need to be put through for consideration. Leilani confirmed the upcoming AGM will be held on 21 May 1-2pm. Jan discussed the purpose of the AGM and confirmed that all MGAEC members must attend as part of their role as an EC member. Jan to send calendar invites to MGAEC for the AGM.

4.2.8 MSO student association information sheet

The committee noted the updated information sheet.

4.2.9 Meet your Reps event

Yiwen encouraged all MGAEC members to RSVP to attend the event and to meet with their constituents.

4.2.10 HDR Stipend

Jan spoke to the continued demand for an increase in the HDR stipend. However, there is low confidence that the University will be open to a further increase at this point in time, considering the cost cutting measures that have emerged. Jan suggested lobbying for the matter outside of the University.

The MGAEC members discussed the issue, and agreed a subcommittee will be established on the topic. The following committee members have expressed to form the subcommittee: Saham Hettiarachchi, Yiwen Yuan, Karan Raman, Ummatul Siddique. Jan will get in contact with the subcommittee to start planning.

5. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in March 2025 at a time and place to be confirmed by members' availability.

The meeting closed at 4:00 pm.