

DCU

Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

School of History and Geography

PhD Handbook 2023-24



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1. Welcome

Welcome to the School of History and Geography at Dublin City University. We are delighted that you have decided to embark on your PhD with us. It is our aim that you will find your time with us intellectually stimulating and we hope that you will feel a part of, and contribute to, our growing community of postgraduate researchers.

As you are new to pursuing a PhD at DCU, it is important that you familiarise yourself with the academic structures of the University. This Handbook is designed to help you find out where to look for the information you need to settle in and progress through postgraduate studies here. Most of this information is available on the DCU website, and we have included links below.

We want you to enjoy studying for your PhD and find it both inspiring and rewarding. And we hope you enjoy life in Dublin. We look forward to working with you over the next few years.

Dr Susan Hegarty
Head of School

2. About the School

The [School of History and Geography](#) is one of seven Schools in the [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#). It came into existence in 2016 with the creation of the enhanced Faculty, which then brought together staff from several institutions. The School of History and Geography is unique in Ireland in its interdisciplinary range and research potential, while our staff are acknowledged experts in their fields, nationally and internationally.

The School is committed to excellence in teaching and research. Since 2016, we have grown rapidly, with new staff, programmes, and increased student numbers (at undergraduate and postgraduate levels). At undergraduate level we teach students on the Bachelor of Arts (Joint Honours) Programme and BA in Climate and Environmental Sustainability, as well as students on the Bachelor of Religious Education and History Programmes. The School also has an MA in History. You are one of our growing community of research graduate students.

Faculty members in the School are outstanding researchers with a range of expertise. Their research profiles are available to you through the [School website](#). Our lively research culture emphasizes the interaction between staff and research students, and across disciplines, as evident in the [School's Research Seminar](#). It provides a forum for staff, students and visiting scholars to present the results of their research.

3. Contacting Staff

The School of History and Geography office is located in D301 on the third floor of the main building on the St Patrick's Campus of DCU, Drumcondra. Gránia Shanahan, the School Assistant, can be reached at historyandgeography@dcu.ie and at (01) 7002064. She can answer many queries relating to practical matters or direct you to the right place.

Your first point of contact on most academic matters should be your Supervisor, but if the query is of an administrative nature other useful contacts are the Research Convenor for the School the School Research Students' Coordinator or the Research Administrator in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (currently Carol Diamond, carol.diamond@dcu.ie), depending on the nature of the query.

You may also find the [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Student Page](#) and the [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Doctoral Research Hub](#) useful.

Staff in the School of History and Geography have a very open attitude to meeting students. Nonetheless, it is usually best to make an appointment. It is best to email rather than phone while meetings may be virtual.

Our staff are:

Dr Susan Hegarty	Geography (Head of School)
Gránia Shanahan	School Assistant
Dr Juliana Adelman	History (Research students' coordinator) (on sabbatical in sem 1)
Dr Sparky Booker	History
Dr Jonathan Cherry	Geography (on sabbatical in sem 2)
Dr Darren Clarke	Geography
Dr Niamh Cullen	Geography
Dr Almar Ennis	Geography (on leave)
Dr Marnie Hay	History (Chair of MA)
Professor James Kelly	History
Dr Leeann Lane	History
Dr Ruth McManus	Geography
Dr Celeste McNamara	History
Dr William Murphy	History (on sabbatical in sem 2)
Dr Daithí Ó Corráin	History
Dr Jimmy O'Keeffe	History
Dr Gerry O'Reilly	Geography
Mr Neville Scarlett	History

Staff contact details, and more information on their areas of expertise, are available on the [School staff](#) page.

4. Pursuing a PhD

In pursuing a PhD at the School of History and Geography, your core task is to research and write a thesis. This is undertaken with the support, and under the direction, of your Supervisor or Supervisors. When completed, your thesis should make an original, coherent and scholarly contribution to the field, while it must be presented in accordance with internationally-accepted academic standards. For further detail regarding DCU's expectations see [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#).

While a PhD can prove a gateway to an academic career, completing a research degree will enable you to develop skills in organization, analysis, communication, presentation skills, and project management. These are skills that will stand to you in whatever career you pursue afterwards.

In parallel to preparing your thesis, and in agreement with your Supervisor(s), you are encouraged to avail of a range of modules and other training opportunities provided by the School and Faculty. These may include subject-specific modules offered as elements in a Structured Doctoral Pathway. These include:

HY509	Interpretation and Argument in History Writing
HY510	Research Methods
HY511	Ireland in the Twentieth Century: Crisis, Continuity and Change
HY512	The Irish Revolution in context
HY513	Gender and Society in Ireland since 1867
HY5**	Promoting history

Further, the Faculty provides a suite of modules (called Graduate Training Elements) designed to assist you in developing a range of skills that might prove essential to your project (e.g. mapping, statistics or interviewing) as well as modules designed to assist in your

professional development (e.g. research ethics, teaching, academic writing, conference presentation, event organization, or cv writing skills). You can find more information about these on the [Graduate Studies Office](#).

All research students in their first year of registration **must** also **complete** the relevant stream of the self-directed 'Online Research Integrity Training Module'. Students will be invited to complete this by an email from the Research Innovation Support office.

All students who are assigned teaching-related responsibilities are strongly encouraged to complete the module GS602 Postgraduate Tutoring Principles and Practice.

For candidates in Humanities who wish to further develop their writing ability or who wish to learn more about the conventions of academic writing, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences offer a specific GTE module. The TP600 module engages postgraduate research students in approaches to advanced academic writing in the Humanities. It includes critical structural analysis of existing texts, interpretative writing, descriptive writing in the context of texts, music, visuals, film etc. Mirroring a peer-review system, it takes into consideration audience, argument, and voice in academic writing and examines the role and function of academic writing conventions.

It is important to stress that you should consult your Supervisor(s) if you identify training that you believe would be useful for your research.

Offices of the University

The [Graduate Studies Office](#) (GSO) is located on the Glasnevin Campus on the ground floor of the McNulty Building. It is led by the Dean of Graduate Studies, Prof Joseph Stokes, and supports the development and delivery of the University's research and taught postgraduate degree programmes, providing a broad range of support services for its graduate student community, across all five faculties of the University. You can contact the GSO team at graduatestudiesoffice@dcu.ie. You may also be in contact with GSO if you have a research stipend from a scholarship or other award.

GSO provides a very useful [Research Student Orientation](#) annually, as well as the up-to-date [Graduate Research Guide](#).

Progression through the various stages of your PhD are approved by the Graduate Studies Research Board (GRSB) and administered by the University Registry Office. All registry queries should be sent to postgraduate.research@dcu.ie or phone 700 8489.

5. Academic progression

A full list of the academic regulations is available from Registry. Be aware that these may change.

Beginning

On embarking upon the PhD, you will normally enter onto a PhD-track programme (DCA66).

From the outset, you are expected to embark on a pattern of regular and consistent work – research and writing – while signing up for and taking the agreed professional development, skills or subject modules. As noted, this work will be overseen and supported by your Supervisor(s), and this should be grounded in an agreed pattern of meetings. Your Supervisor(s) will provide you with guidance, advice, feedback, and professional mentorship.

In addition to your Supervisor(s), you will be assigned a member of staff who is known as an Independent Panel Member. You will meet this member of staff at least once a year. This Independent Panel Member should be regarded as a further source of advice and counsel, while in the event of difficulties in the matter of progression, or in the supervisory relationship, the Independent Panel Member will seek to aid a resolution.

Progress to PhD Degree

In order to progress your registration status from PhD track to the PhD degree you will have to complete a PGR3 PhD-track/PhD Confirmation Procedure. This normally consists of the submission of a substantial written piece (e.g. a draft chapter) for examination by a staff member other than your Supervisor(s), who acts as an Internal Examiner. To progress a PGR3 form must be completed and

submitted to Registry. Your application at that point must be supported by your Supervisor(s) and is subject to a satisfactory performance in an oral examination, conducted jointly by your Supervisor(s) and the other Internal Examiner. The completed PGR3 form must be submitted to Registry *at least two weeks* in advance of the next Graduate Studies Board (GSB) meeting.

The confirmation procedure must take place not later than after 21 months of research for full-time students (and at an appropriate corresponding time for part-time students). If the outcome of the confirmation procedure is unsuccessful you may, if appropriate, be invited to complete such research as will allow you to graduate with a Master's degree.

Annual Review

Each year, starting at the end of your first year, you will have a formal review of your work by a panel, including your Supervisor(s) and the Independent Panel Member. During this process, you must satisfy your Supervisor(s) and the Independent Panel Member that you have made sufficient progress to warrant being granted another year of study. If you cannot satisfy them that you have made sufficient progress, you might be offered the opportunity to be examined for a Masters by Research degree or required to withdraw. The annual reviews usually take place in June and you must be available on campus at this time. The reviews will be preceded by the submission of a short progress report and, if required, a substantive piece of written work. You will receive both oral and written feedback after the review. Each annual review involves the completion and submission of a PGR2 form. The form is completed on Loop (the internal learning management system).

Intention to Submit

At least three months in advance of the completion of your thesis, you and your Supervisor will submit a PGR4 form. This is official notification that you

intend to submit your thesis for examination, and, normally, it is at this point that your examiners (internal and external) are nominated. These examiners must be approved by the Graduate Studies Board.

All the forms discussed above are available online via student and staff portal pages under the Research tab and from the following link on the [Registry Postgraduate Research](#) page.

Viva Voce

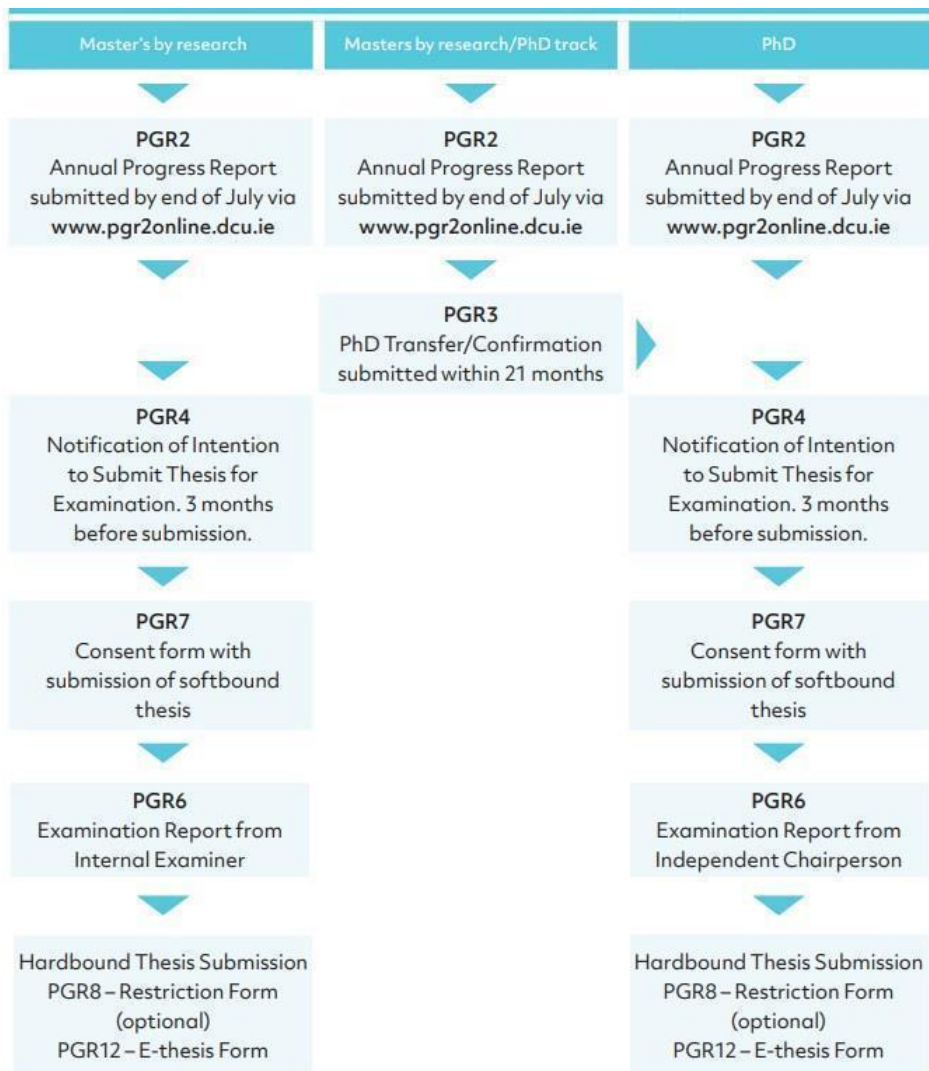
With your thesis completed and your examiners approved by the Graduate Research Studies Board, you must submit your thesis as required by regulations and a PGR7 form.

The *viva voce* is an examination and you will likely be nervous, but it is also as an opportunity for your work to be attentively evaluated by an internal and external examiner, a unique process in your academic career. Like your transfer exam, it will likely begin with your presenting an overview of your work and conclusions. Then expect a rigorous series of questions, dialogues, and critiques from your examiners.

Be clear, concise, and respectful in your answers and arguments. While you should defend your positions, you should also recognise and appreciate how insights and challenges from the examiners can ultimately improve and strengthen your final piece of scholarship, and perhaps guide you toward future publication beyond the PhD.

Upon completion of the viva, the examiners fill-out form PGR6, Examination Report for the Award of a Higher Degree, with an explanation of the recommended result, along with critiques and suggestions.

You can find many of the forms mentioned above and a timetable of relevant submission dates and meetings at the [Registry's Postgraduate Research](#) page.



6. Some Other Basics

Your Responsibilities

Primary responsibility for completion of the PhD rests with you. As well as being an intellectual test, the PhD is a test of your capacity to work independently and consistently over a long period.

Each research student must keep in contact with his or her supervisors and inform them about the progress of the research. You should meet the Supervisor(s) for discussion, submit written work and perform other academic exercises (for example, attending and contributing to the Research Seminar) according to the timetable negotiated with the Supervisors. While the doors of most members of the School are nearly always open to postgraduates, students may find it best to make an appointment, especially in the current climate.

Students should inform their Supervisor(s) as early as possible of anything that might affect their ability to complete an agreed programme of work on schedule, rather than bringing problems to the table at a late stage. The essential point to remember is that the School is on the side of its postgraduate students in relation to almost any problem that might arise, and will do everything possible to help, given good notice and the information necessary to do so.

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policy on [plagiarism](#). Plagiarism is academic theft and is one of the most serious offences in academia. Students found to have plagiarised may be required to withdraw from the PhD programme. Also consult the DCU handbook, [Code of Good Research Practice](#).

Any candidate conducting research on human subjects is required to obtain approval from the Faculty of HSS Research Ethics Committee

(F-REC). Ethical approval must be obtained before the start of the data collection/analysis. Information on the application process for ethical approval can be found [here](#) and the guidance on the application process to F-REC can be found [here](#). All higher-risk research projects must be reviewed by the University-level REC.

The Role of Supervisors

Your Supervisor(s) and Independent Panel Member are voices of experience and sources of guidance.

Supervisors have both a reactive and a proactive role. On the one hand, Supervisors must be accessible to the student for academic help and advice during the progress of the research and the final preparation of the thesis. On the other hand, Supervisors have an active duty to be informed about the progress of the research student's work, to give frank and constructive opinions about this work (whether or not these are asked for), to make sure that the student is aware of the quantity and quality of work required, and to negotiate and monitor a timetable for its submission.

Supervisors undertake to provide careful analysis and constructive criticism of all work submitted to them within an agreed period of time. Normally, your Supervisor(s) will meet you for an agreed schedule of formal meetings. It is likely that they will make themselves available, when feasible, for informal discussions with students.

Supervisors also have an administrative duty to submit the necessary forms to allow their student progress and submit the PhD.

If your work progresses well it is likely that your Supervisor(s) will remain mentors and referees during your subsequent career.

Embracing a Research Culture

It is important as a PhD student that you embrace the research culture in the School and in your discipline.

The School has a Research Seminar Series and you should attend this on a regular basis. It is likely that this will take place online during this academic year. This is certainly the case for the first semester.

You should also attend and, where appropriate, present at the seminars, workshops, and conferences relevant to your discipline whether these are organized by the University or other relevant actors in the field. This is important if you are to understand the state of your field, but also if you are to establish the relationships that may be of assistance to you in a career in academia.

Funding Opportunities

Doing a PhD is expensive. We hope to offer as much support as we can to our best PhD students. Some of you, for instance, are on a studentship awarded by the School in conjunction with the Faculty. There are also external funding schemes, notably with the Irish Research Council ([IRC](#)), which you should aim to secure. Students who are in receipt of a scholarship from the School are required to apply for an IRC doctoral scholarship. This should be done no later than the start of the second year of your research. The IRC deadline is usually in October. DCU and the School provide useful workshops on how to write a successful application.

You can also apply once for a Conference Travel Grant from the DCU Research Committee (both full-time and part-time students are eligible) which is capped at €500. The scheme is administered by the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) located in the McNulty Building (LG13). Terms and conditions and the application procedure can be

obtained from the GSO and can also be found [here](#).

Finances allowing, the Faculty also provides a competitive scheme that supports PhD students to publish in academic journals, while some of the disciplinary societies and organizations offer grants and prizes.

There is normally a small amount of money in the School budget reserved to support PhD students. Please discuss any extra costs, e.g. registration fee for attending a summer school with your supervisor and the Head of School.

Selected key contacts

Head of History and Geography

Dr Susan Hegarty: susan.hegarty@dcu.ie

Research Students' Coordinator, School of History and Geography

Dr Juliana Adelman: juliana.adelman@dcu.ie

Research Convenor, School of History and Geography TBC

School representative at the Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Daithí Ó Corráin: Daithi.OCorrain@dcu.ie

Faculty Research Administrator

Carol Diamond : carol.diamond@dcu.ie

Student Representative on Faculty Research Committee TBC

History and Geography Subject Librarian

Ellen Breen: ellen.breen@dcu.ie

Research and Scholarships Administrator (GSO)

Jonny Hobson jonny.hobson@dcu.ie