

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Wednesday 21 January 2015

9.00 – 10.55 a.m. in A204

Present: Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry, Professor Liam Barry, Ms Lisa Buckley, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Dr Patricia Flynn, Dr Mary Ivers, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Ms Rachel Keegan, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Dr Mary Rose Sweeney, Dr Ana Terrés, Mr Ronan Tobin

Apologies: Professor Kevin Rafter, Dr Tim McCormac, Dr Caroline McMullan

The Chair welcomed Dr Mary Ivers to her first meeting of Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) as Director of Research at All Hallows and thanked Dr Bernadette Flanagan for her very valuable contribution to GRSB.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted with the addition of an approval of appointment of external examiner (PGR4), added as item 11.8 and one item of information under AOB.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2014 (GRSB/A1/1)

The minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2014 were approved, subject to minor corrections, under items 11.3-11.7.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 11 December 2014

- 3.1** It was noted that the Chair had incorporated feedback and suggested amendments to the *Draft Guidelines on deferrals for Research Students*, a revised copy of which was circulated to members with the documentation for this meeting (Item 8).

It was noted that subsequent to circulation some minor additional edits had been completed. There was further discussion in relation to the guidelines and some further amendments were agreed. The guidelines were approved subject to completion of the amendments as discussed.

- 3.2** It was noted that the Chair had provided feedback to the Chair of the Chancellor's Medal Review Group (Item 5).

- 3.3** It was noted that discussions with the Fees Office in relation to fees issues for postgraduate research students were ongoing (Item 3.3).

- 3.4** It was noted that resolution of Course Builder issues (university wide agreed descriptors for GTE modules) was awaiting the introduction of a new version of Course Builder in 2015 (Item 3.4).

- 3.5** It was noted that background data relating to a possible cap on Externs' travel expenses was currently being gathered (Item 3.5).

- 3.6** It was noted that support from the Graduate Studies Office and the Teaching Enhancement Unit in terms of implementing GTE cross-cutting themes was a matter for ongoing discussion (Item 3.6).

- 3.7** It was noted that NS5041 is to be referred to the Working Group on cross-cutting modules (Item 3.7).

- 3.8** It was noted that a broader initiative across the university on training in research integrity is ongoing (Item 3.2).

- 3.9** It was noted that information provided for a student (School of Communications) as an attachment to the PGR3 form but which should be incorporated into the form was being followed up by Registry (Item 3.9).

- 3.10** It was noted that a suggested amendment to the PGR14 form, i.e. inserting a stipulation on it, that sensitive information should not be included, but rather should be noted in a separate document had been completed (Item 3.11).

- 3.11 It was noted that feedback had been provided to the module co-ordinator with respect to the EE609 module (Item 4.1).
- 3.12 It was noted that the PGR3 form (School of Nursing and Human Sciences) where a more detailed report was requested is ongoing (Item 10.12).
- 3.13 It was noted that the PGR3 form (School of Electronic Engineering) where a more detailed report was requested had been completed (Item 10.6).
- 3.14 It was noted that the PGR3 form (School of Electronic Engineering) where a more detailed report was requested had been completed (Item 10.9).
- 3.15 It was noted that the transfer application (GRSB/A8/12.1) from All Hallows to year 6 of part-time PhD track register based at Mater Dei Institute was approved by Chair's action (Item 12.2.1).
- 3.16 It was noted that a PGR3 form (DCUBS) had been approved by Chair's action on 16 December 2014.
- 3.17 It was noted that a revised (change of internal examiner) PGR4 form (School of Computing) was approved by Chair's action on 19 December 2014.
- 3.18 It was noted that a PGR4 and PGR14 form (School of Physical Sciences) was approved by Chair's action on 6 January 2014.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Proposed Graduate Training Elements Modules (GTEs)

- 4.1 There were none for consideration.

5. Incorporation and Graduate Research

There was no report on this item.

6. Quality Assurance of Graduate Training Elements (GTEs) (excluding those part of accredited programmes) (GRSB2015/A1/6)

The Chair informed GRSB that the document, as circulated, had been provided to the Deputy Registrar and brought to the attention of all Associate Deans for

Teaching and Learning/Education. It is the intention that the first review of non-programme GTE modules would begin in the next academic year.

R. Keegan outlined the background to the document drawing particular attention to the following:

- The proposal to require external examiners for non-programme based GTE modules.
- A periodic review of all non-programme based GTEs to take place on a three-yearly basis in the first instance, and moving to a five yearly basis at the next iteration.

In the ensuing discussion the following items *inter alia* were raised and clarified:

- Where research students are taking a GTE module which is part of a taught post graduate programme, although practice varies somewhat between Faculties, research students are not necessarily reviewed by the external examiner. The Chair suggested that she would speak to the Deputy Registrar in this regard.
- To establish best practice, and because GTE modules had been running for six years, it was the view of the Chair that a three-yearly review would be required in the first instance, moving then to a five-yearly periodic review.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) will be introducing good practice guidelines over the same period and if those impacted on the proposed Quality Assurance process or timing, then the Chair indicated she would come back to GRBSB for further input.
- It was estimated that there are about forty approved GTE modules which are not part of taught programme structures, however it was anticipated that the actual number of modules to be reviewed, i.e. those being run, could be considerably less.

It was agreed that, subject to input from USC colleagues, the Quality Assurance document will be finalised and the preparatory work done in relation to Course Builder and identifying the modules for review. Thereafter, a work plan for the next year will be completed.

7. E Portfolio (Presentation by R. Keegan)

R. Keegan outlined that she had undertaken a project to investigate the use of the E-portfolio system, currently being rolled out to undergraduate students, for research students. It was noted that this could be a positive development for research students.

Having had an initial review of the system, it was clear that the existing undergraduate-based skills matrix would require development for use by research students. It was proposed that the IUA Graduate Skills, based on the IUA Skills Statement, could be used as the basis for the skills/attribute part of the matrix and it was noted that it was possible to make this change on the system without further development. Following discussion and clarification that research students would be made aware of the IUA Graduate Skills both through induction and through the annual progression process, it was agreed that they would be used.

It was noted that it was currently not technically possible to tailor the top line of the existing matrix to suit research student purposes. Following a brief discussion it was noted that R. Keegan would: explore the potential cost of making changes to the system; investigate the implications for DCU students with existing portfolios transitioning to being research students; meet with the Teaching Enhancement Unit; consult with B. Harman as Students' Union representative; consult with the Career's Office in relation to input to the top-line of the matrix, with a view to reverting to GRSB with an elaboration of the initial documentation tabled at the meeting.

8. The role of Extra Panel Member in Confirmation/Transfer (GRSB2015/A1/8)

The Chair outlined the background to this item and sought the views of GRSB on whether or not the person who is a panel member, but not involved in the day-to-day supervision of a research student could also act as internal examiner at confirmation or transfer stage of that student. The document *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* is not explicit in this regard. Following discussion it was noted that practice varies between Faculties, and there was consensus that it would be best practice to avoid this happening where possible, however due to the shortage of staff available for supervisory panels in some Schools and linked Colleges, this was not always feasible.

It was agreed that an explicit statement would be inserted into the Academic Regulations in April, that it is allowable in some circumstances, for a panel member to be an internal examiner at confirmation or transfer stage.

9. Proposed Joint Award Agreement with Military University of Technology, (MUT) Warsaw under the 'EXTATIC' Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctoral Programme (GRSB2015/A1/9)

The Chair indicated that the document as circulated was for discussion and feedback only as there were still outstanding details to be clarified. She wished to

seek the views of GRSB, in advance of sending it to the collaborating Institution for completion of their details.

The following items were noted/clarified in the discussion which followed:

- There will be a specific tailored agreement for each individual student pursuing a joint award on the EXTATIC programme.
- In this particular case, the student will spend the majority of time at the home institution (MUT) and DCU will host the student ('visitor' status) for six months
- As is the norm in Poland, the student is 'employed' as a research worker at MUT, however, it will be made clear in the agreement that he is pursuing a doctoral programme.
- Fee issues have yet to be clarified.
- Noted that it is adequate under the policy that the student is registered at DCU for six months to grant the joint award.
- While the agreement in question is around a joint award, there are still issues around the awarding of double degrees and it was noted that this will be discussed further at IUA level.
- Further discussions will take place with Registry about the implementation of the joint award.

GRSB members were invited to provide additional feedback to the Chair and copy Dr T. Dixon, who was drawing up the document.

10. Applications for Transfer to, or Confirmation on the PhD Register (PGR3)

- 10.1 GRSB2015/A1/10.1, School of Communications
Approved
- 10.2 GRSB2015/A1/10.2, School of Education Studies
Approved
- 10.3 GRSB2015/A1/10.3, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved, subject to submission of 'other panel member' information.
- 10.4 GRSB2015/A1/10.4, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved, subject to submission of 'other panel member' information.
- 10.5 GRSB2015/A1/10.5, School of Communications
Approved

10.6 GRSB2015/A1/10.6, School of Computing
Approved, subject to resubmission of the form confirming involvement in the process by the Principal Supervisor and reflecting that the outcome of the PGR3 process was arrived at by the joint agreement of the Principal Supervisor and Internal Examiner.

11. Appointment of External Examiners (PGR4)

11.1 GRSB2015/A1/11.1, MSc, School of Biotechnology
Dr Susan McDonnell, UCD
Approved

11.2 GRSB2015/A1/11.2, MSc, School of Chemical Sciences
Dr Helen Hughes, Waterford Institute of Technology
Approved.

11.3 GRSB2015/A1/11.3, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering

Professor Aidan Duffy, Dublin Institute of Technology
Approved

11.4 GRSB2015/A1/11.4, PhD, History Department, St. Patrick's College
Professor Patrick Geoghegan, Trinity College Dublin
Approved

11.5 GRSB2015/A1/11.5, MA, Human Sciences, All Hallows College
Dr Stephen O'Brien, University College Cork
Approved

11.6 GRSB2015/A1/11.6, PhD, All Hallows College
Professor Elochukwu Uzukwu, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh
Approved

11.7 GRSB2015/A1/11.7, PhD, All Hallows College
Professor Mark Burrows, University of Applied Sciences, Bochum, Germany
Approved

11.8 GRSB2015/A1/11.8, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Dr Dimitrie Popescu, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia
Approved, subject to confirmation to GRSB that there is no other external examiner who is in closer proximity to DCU

12. Other student issues

There were no items.

13 AOB

13.1 ‘Tell it Straight’ Competition

The Chair informed GRSB that the annual ‘Tell It Straight’ competition will take place on 29 April 2015 in the Helix and asked if colleagues would ensure that the competition is promoted to students in their Faculties and Institutions. There has been a small change to the competition this year in that there are two categories of entry, with first year students in a separate category.

End

Date of next meeting:

**Thursday 5th March 2015
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____