

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday 3 March 2016

9.30 – 11.10 am in A204

Present: Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Dr Patricia Flynn, Dr Charlotte Holland, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Ms Rachel Keegan, Dr Tim McCormac, Ms Yvonne McDonough, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Professor Kevin Rafter, Dr Mark Roantree, Dr Mary Rose Sweeney, Dr Ana Terrés, Mr Ronan Tobin

Apologies: Ms Lisa Buckley, Dr Mary Ivers, Dr Caroline McMullan

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Ms Yvonne McDonough from Registry who was attending in place of Ms Lisa Buckley.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the addition of the following under AOB:

- Update on Incorporation

2. Minutes of the meeting of 21 January 2016

The minutes of the meeting of 21 January 2016, were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 21 January 2016

- 3.1** It was noted that the Human Resources Office had indicated to the Chair that the new payment process for research students had worked well thus far and a presentation to Heads of School would not be needed at this time. It was noted that should further assistance be required, the HR Office would provide it on a case by case basis (Item 3.1).
- 3.2** It was noted that the document *Capacity building in relation to examining* had been finalised. It was noted too that the proposed training for examiners had been organised and would take place in early April and mid-May 2016. Specific details would issue from the Human Resources Office over the coming days (Item 5).
- 3.3** It was noted that the Annual Timeline for GTE and pathway approvals/noting had been agreed with the Associate Deans for Research and would be rolled out in part in 2015-2016, and in full from 2016-2017 (Item 3.7).
- 3.4** It was noted that the review of systems and processes with respect to the Graduate Research Assessment Boards, the Faculty Award Boards for Research Degrees and related items had been discussed with the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning and the Associate Deans for Research and will be discussed with administrators over the coming weeks (Item 3.8).
- 3.5** 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 2015-2016 and will be addressed when possible (Item 3.2).
- 3.6** It was noted that for the transfer to the PhD Register (PGR3) of a candidate in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies a re-submission containing more specific information on the oral examination was awaited (Item 3.3) (Item 8.53, 7 September 2015).
- 3.7** It was noted that for the transfer to the PhD Register (PGR3) of a candidate in the School of Chemical Sciences, confirmation that both principal supervisor and internal examiner were involved in the oral examination, and more specific information on the oral examination had been provided and the item was complete (Item 3.4) (Item 13.6, 22 October 2015).
- 3.8** It was noted that for the transfer to the PhD Register (PGR3) of a candidate in the School of Computing more specific information on the oral examination had been provided and the item was complete (Item 3.6) (Item 13.16, 22 October 2015).

- 3.9** It was noted that the detailed analysis of the entry survey for research students would be made available to GRBSB as soon as it is completed (Item 3.9).
- 3.10** It was noted that feedback had been received from Faculties with respect to the draft document on guidance for preparation for the *viva voce* for research students and the final document is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.10).
- 3.11** It was noted that for the transfer to the PhD Register (PGR4) of a candidate in the School of Biotechnology/NICB, the regulation on the minimum registration requirement had been brought to the attention of the School/Centre (Item 7.1).
- 3.12** It was noted that for the transfer to the PhD Register (PGR4) of a candidate in the Education Department, SPD confirmation had been received with respect to the experience of the internal examiner and the item was complete (Item 7.3).
- 3.13** It was noted that with respect to the request for an extension to the maximum registration period (PGR14) for a candidate in the School of Biotechnology, the form has been resubmitted and the item was complete (Item 8.2.1).
- 3.14** It was noted that for an application to transfer to the PhD register (PRG4) for a candidate in the School of Biotechnology, a more detailed report, as requested, had been submitted and the item was complete (Item 6.8).
- 3.15** It was noted that a request for an extension to the maximum registration period (PGR14) for a candidate in the School of Computing was approved by Chair's Action on 8 February 2016. It was noted too that the School has been advised that the student registration should be in line with the engagement of the student (Item 8.2.3).
- 3.16** It was noted that an extension of appointment of the external examiner (PGR14) to facilitate acceptance of a thesis for a student in All Hallows College was approved by Chair's Action on 24 February 2016 (Original approval 11 December 2014, A8/11.10).

SECTION B: Policy and strategy issues

4. Graduate Researcher Development

4.1 Structured Doctoral Pathway, School of Nursing and Human Sciences

Noted

4.2 Module on Communication Skills

It was noted that the paper as tabled was an early draft and was being introduced to facilitate feedback, establish which Schools would be interested in participating in the module, and to request Associate Deans for Research to nominate interested Faculty colleagues to join a working group to further develop the module.

It was noted in the discussion which followed that the module would be co-ordinated by the Graduate Studies Office which would also provide general training. However, if students were to be awarded credits for taking the module, then discipline-specific assessment would have to be completed at School level.

5. Proposal re. PhD Formats

The Chair indicated that the proposal with respect to PhD by Artefact and PhD thorough Creative or Performance Practice, as circulated, had arisen in the context of Incorporation, and the linked provider agreement with Dundalk Institute of Technology. She wished to note her thanks to those involved in the proposal indicating that a tremendous effort had been made to establish international best practice and to bring DCU's regulations into line with the international norms in this regard.

Following discussion on the documents as presented it was noted that:

- The views outlined from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences were that the 20,000 word minimum limit set for both formats could be considered modest, and the availability of resources to accommodate such PhDs is extremely limited.
- The Registry wished to consider the resource implications of the proposal further, particularly with respect to the presentation and examination of the performance (s) or creative works in public with access facilitated for examiners.

The related proposed change to the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis and the associated Guidelines for candidates, supervisors and examiners were approved subject to the following amendments:

Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis

- *In each case, the degree of PhD is awarded in recognition of research which has made a significant and coherent contribution to knowledge* (1.1.4) Deletion or alignment of sentence above with the definition of 'PhD' as contained earlier in the Regulations.
- Rephrasing and further clarification of *format restrictions criteria* (9.1.4 of proposal).

Guidelines for PhD by Artefact

- Reconciliation of the two statements as follows with respect to archiving of artefacts: *A student may choose to include CD recordings within the inside cover of the thesis but this is not a requirement and Elements which cannot be presented as a PDF must be archived in another digital format and made available with the e-thesis.*

Thesis Submission and Examination Guide

The document as presented was approved subject to the following:

- Completion of the amendments notified to Ms. Rachel Keegan in advance of GRSB, and completion of any amendments which will be submitted by Registry over the coming days.
- Addition of web link from the Registry research thesis cover page template to the specific guidelines on the formatting of thesis for research students.

6. Feedback on PGR3 Form

It was noted that a request had been made for a more structured format to the PGR3 form to assist with satisfactory completion, and avoidance of the need to seek all the relevant signatures a second time. The request arose in the context of a requirement from GRSB for the re-submission of a form in a particular Faculty. It was noted that in general the quality of examination record in PGR3 forms had improved, and that colleagues value the opportunity to write a free-text report. However, it was agreed that some elements of the form could be amended to clarify approval criteria.

It was noted that the PGR3 form would be reviewed for 2016-2017. It was agreed that the following changes would be considered:

- Provision of a series of tick boxes in which the elements of the examination process would be outlined and could be confirmed by the examiners as completed.
- Provision of a word count guide of 200/300 words for the report on the written submission and the oral examination.

SECTION C: Individual student issues

8. Applications for transfer to the PhD Register or confirmation on the PhD Register (PGR3)

- 8.1 GRSB2016/A2/8.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved
- 8.2 GRSB2016/A2/8.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved
- 8.3 GRSB2016/A2/8.3, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 8.4 GRSB2016/A2/8.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved
- 8.5 GRSB2016/A2/8.5, PhD, School of Education Studies
Approved
- 8.6 GRSB2016/A2/8.6, PhD, School of Education Studies
Approved
- 8.7 GRSB2016/A2/8.7, PhD, School of Law and Government
Approved, subject to provision of additional detail and specificity with respect to both the oral examination and written submission.
- 8.8 GRSB2016/A2/8.8, PhD, School of Law and Government
Not Approved, clarification to be sought that the transfer examination process was conducted in line with regulations.

8.9 GRSB2016/A2/8.9, PhD, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved

9. Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)

9.1 GRSB2016/A2/9.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Dr Mary Murphy, National University of Ireland, Galway
Approved

9.2 GRSB2016/A2/9.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Professor Bazbek Davletov, University of Sheffield
Approved, noted that this is an extension of the original approval and noted too that the Head of School has confirmed that a second external examiner was not required in this case.

9.3 GRSB2016/A2/9.3, PhD, DCU Business School
Dr Charles Clay Dibrell, University of Mississippi
Approved

9.4 GRSB2016/A2/9.4, PhD, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Dr Elizabeth Nixon, Trinity College Dublin
Approved

9.5 GRSB2016/A2/9.5, PhD, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Dr Eilis Hennessy, University College Dublin
Approved

9.6 GRSB2016/A2/9.6, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
Dr Andrew Taylor, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
Approved

9.7 GRSB2016/A2/9.7, Special Education Department, SPD
Dr Karen Guldberg, University of Birmingham
Approved, noted that the internal examiner is approved subject to meeting the criteria for internal examiners prior to the examination.

9.8 GRSB2016/A2/9.8, PhD, All Hallows College
Professor Martin Laird, Villanova University, USA
Approved

10. Other student issues

10.1 Request for Extension to Maximum Registration Period OR Re-admission to the Research Programme (PGR14)

10.1.1 GRSB2016/A2/8.1.1, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved

10.1.2 GRSB2016/A2/8.1.2, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved

11. Any other business

11.1 PhD Ireland (www.phdireland.ie)

The Chair outlined that an exercise to update published PhD Ireland projects, originally completed in the context of the Brazilian Science without Borders programme, had commenced recently. The objective of the website is to provide readily accessible information for funded international students seeking a research project. Members were asked to encourage colleagues to contribute to the update of the projects, as it could prove an important tool to attract international students.

11.2 It was requested and agreed that when amendments are being made to the PGR3 form that there would be a change made under Section C from ‘traditional format’ to ‘by Monograph’.

11.3 Incorporation Update

Progress to date with respect to Incorporation was reported and the following were noted:

- Work is continuing on the transferring of student data for continuing research students.
- Transferring research students will be sent a letter providing information on Incorporation.
- An information session will be held for research students in May 2016.
- Within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the new Schools are beginning the process of integration into the committee structures.
- The Institute of Education structures will be in place shortly.

- Faculty members involved, both academic and administrative were commended on the work completed to date. It was agreed that Induction packs from orientation could usefully be made available for incoming research convenors and Heads of School.
- The online PGR2 process will be rolled out for the first time to panel members from SPD and MDI for first year research students and training will be provided by Registry.
- A review of the Intellectual Property matters and associated commercialisation and the roll-out of the new Research Support System are ongoing.

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 14 April 2016 at 9.30 a.m. in A204