

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD**MINUTES**

Thursday 11 December 2014

9.00 - 10.00 a.m. in A204

Present: Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry, Professor Liam Barry, Ms Lisa Buckley, Dr Bernadette Flanagan, Dr Patricia Flynn, Mr Brian Harman, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Dr Caroline McMullan, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Professor Kevin Rafter, Dr Ana Terrés, Mr Ronan Tobin, Dr Mary Rose Sweeney

Apologies: Dr Gabriel Flynn, Dr Tim McCormac

In attendance: Ms Rachel Keegan

The Chair, on behalf of the Graduate Research Studies Board, welcomed new members to the Board: Mr. Ronan Tobin, FAPG representative, Mary Rose Sweeney, Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Science and Health, and also Margaret Irwin-Bannon in a new capacity as GRSB Secretary. She also expressed sincere thanks to Louise McDermott for her significant contribution as Secretary of GRSB over many years, and wished her well in her new work related to the Incorporation project.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the deferral of Items 9 and 12.2.1 GRSB2014/A8 and with the addition of the following three items of AOB:

- Advance notification of intention to develop a quality assurance mechanism for GTE modules which are not part of an accredited programme.
- Date of next meeting
- Payment of external examiner fees

2. Minutes of the meeting of 30 October 2014 (GRSB/A8/2)

The minutes of the meeting of 30th October 2014 were approved. The Chair wished to record her thanks to R. Keegan and G. Curran for the production of minutes.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 30th October 2014

- 3.1** It was noted that the Chair had approved one further application for transfer from All Hallows College, and the remaining application was in train, although deferred from the current agenda, item 12.2.1 (Item 12.3).
- 3.2** It was noted that the Chair had had discussions with the Research and Innovation Support Office and it was intended that there will be a broader initiative across the university on the inclusion of research integrity in Graduate Training Elements (GTEs) (Item 8, 8/9/2014).
- 3.3** It was noted that discussions with the Fees Office in relation to fees issues for postgraduate research students were ongoing. (Item 9).
- 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 3.15).
- 3.5** It was noted that background data relating to a possible cap on Externs' travel expenses was currently being gathered (Item 3.8).
- 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 3.15, 8/9/2014).
- 3.7** It was noted that NS5041 is to be referred to the Working Group on cross-cutting modules (Item 3.16, 8/9/2014).
- 3.8** It was noted that consideration is yet to be given to the issue of whether a supervisory panel member may or may not, act as internal examiner at the transfer/confirmation stage (3.19, 8/9/2014).
- 3.9** It was noted that information provided for a student in the 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 9.16, 8/9/2014).

- 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 was ongoing (Item 11.2, 8/9/2014).
- 3.11** It was noted that the seminar on Research Integrity had been delivered as part of the induction programme for postgraduate research students.
- 3.12** It was noted that for the PGR3 form approved at the GRSB meeting of 8th Sept 2014 (item 10.49) a change to title and abstract was noted by the Chair.
- 3.13** Regarding the DkIT linked provider schedule it was noted that Ms. T. Dixon had included particular provisions regarding Professional Doctorates (Item 6).
- 3.14** It was noted that Prof C. O’Gorman had liaised with Ms. T Dixon regarding the DkIT linked provider schedule and the wording required to accommodate DCUBS regarding external accreditation (Item 6).
- 3.15** It was noted that Ms. T. Dixon had discussed process issues with Registry which needed to be addressed in relation to transitional supervisory arrangement agreements of SPD and MDI based students (Item 7).
- 3.16** It was noted that Ms. T. Dixon had made amendments to the transitional supervisory arrangement document to reflect feedback received (Item 7).
- 3.17** It was noted that a PGR3 form to be signed by the student and wording changed to reflect the joint nature of the project had been completed (Item 10.2).
- 3.18** It was noted that the high word count for a PGR4 form was drawn to the attention of the examiners (Item 11.4).
- 3.19** With regard to a PGR4 form it was noted that clarification had been received regarding the experience of an examiner (Item 11.14).
- 3.20** It was noted that a transfer application to year 4 of the part-time PhD register, based at Mater Dei Institute had been approved by Chair’s action (Item 12.3).

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Proposed Graduate Training Elements

4.1 EE609 Modern Cryptography (GRSB2014/A8/4)

Approved: Subject to the amendment of the NFQ level from level 10 to level 9 and revision of the articulation of learning outcomes to reflect level 9 outcomes; and amendment of module co-ordinator information in the first section of module specification on Course Builder to reflect module co-ordinator name as reflected in final section on Course Builder.

5. Request from Chancellor's Medal Review Group (GRSB2014/A8/5b)

The Chair indicated that the Chancellor's Medal Review Group had requested that Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) consider the existing procedure for nomination for the award of the Chancellor's medal, with a view to increasing the number of nominations at postgraduate level. In the discussion on the current procedure which followed, the following suggestion and points were made:

- Provide further detail on the nomination process for research students in the procedures document (Under points 3 and 4).
- Provide some guidance on the definition of 'excellence' where it relates to a postgraduate research student.
- Where external examiners have particularly referred to the exceptional quality and performance of a research student, this might be captured at the Faculty Research Award Board and incorporated in the process.
- Amend the nomination form to so that the questions are more generic and less undergraduate focussed (e.g. INTRA, project work).
- Introduce two deadlines in the year (autumn and spring) so as to include the Progression and Award Boards for taught postgraduate students.

6. Report on Card Fee and Scholarships/Grants (GRSB2014/A8/6)

The report on Card Fee and Scholarships/Grants was noted.

In the brief discussion on this report, the following was noted:

- The card fee remains useful to a high number of students. Procedures have been strengthened and regularised and students are required to conform to the deadlines set for submission of theses.
- With regard to the Postgraduate Travel Grant, not all students use the grant and challenges still exist in finding timely mechanisms to pay students.

- In relation to the postgraduate accommodation scholarship, there are five accommodation units available for distribution by Faculties and the Access Office and there is a challenge each year in being able to provide details on awarded students in the timeframe set out by the Accommodation Office.
- It was noted by the Chair that as yet, no funding has been identified for the O'Hare Scholarship Scheme for 2014-2015. The Chair indicated that she would be raising the matter with senior management. It was noted in the discussion which followed that there were concerns that monies to support the O'Hare Scholarship Scheme had been reduced at central level and it was felt strongly that this scheme should be prioritised, as it supports such an important mainstream activity.

The Chair wished to note her thanks to J. Hobson of the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) for the improvements that have been made in the systems and administration of the schemes.

7. Report on induction/exit surveys (GRSB2014/A8/7a)

7.1 Postgraduate Induction

R. Keegan (GSO) outlined some of the key findings from the report on Induction for postgraduate students drawing particular attention to the following:

- While the level of attendance at orientation was good, in general, the level of attendance at induction events was poor.
- The *Introduction to Research Integrity* session had the highest attendance, attributed to the fact that it was promoted strongly through the Schools.
- The number of students signing up had increased from last year, however this did not necessarily translate into actual attendance.

Following the briefing, there was a general discussion on induction events and the following points were raised:

- Postgraduate induction has now run for two years and it is timely to focus on student engagement and ways of improving attendance.
- Although induction has been integrated into the structured PhD pathways, the encouragement of students to attend was possibly not followed through at School and supervisor level. The Chair indicated that she intended to meet with individual schools and, in the context of reviewing pathways, discuss attendance data at an individual school level.
- The suggestion was made that poor attendance at the library session could possibly be attributed to the preference of students for *Mendeley* over *RefWorks*.

- The question of whether or not to reconsider the timing of induction was also discussed and it was agreed that this would be explored with a view to finding the optimum time (s) to run sessions, whether in single or multiple blocks of time and at different times of the year.

The Chair indicated that she would also raise the issue of timing of induction with Schools.

7.2 Postgraduate Exit Survey

R. Keegan outlined some of the key findings from the exit surveys of postgraduate students, having compared it with the data from last year's survey, noting particularly:

- There were 56 responses out of possible 148 students.
- With regard to satisfaction with supervision, the vast majority of postgraduate students were in the 'neutral', 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' range.
- There seemed to be a misinterpretation of the term 'annual review', given the existence of the PGR2 process.

In the brief discussion which followed the following points were noted:

- Given the number of responses, 7/8 out of 56 was a high figure of those who indicated 'dissatisfaction' with elements of supervision.
- The fact that 60% of students want to stay in academia might possible point to an absence of exposure to industry, although this is countered by the fact that 31% want to pursue careers outside of academia.
- It was noted that DCU Career Services will be providing sessions for postgraduates next year, which might change these survey figures somewhat in coming years.

8. Draft Guidelines on Deferral for Research Students (GRSB2014/A8/8)

The Chair outlined that the draft guidelines on deferral for Research are an elaboration of the information on the form currently in use and she suggested that it might be useful to decouple the guidelines from the form.

In the brief discussion on the draft guidelines on deferral for Research Students the following changes were suggested:

- To clearly indicate that a research student can either defer for six or twelve months and that there is no other alternative (*delete the graphic referring to up to three months*).
- Under the heading 'A Deferral is for' delete the word 'unexpected' and substitute with the word 'exceptional'.

- Under the heading ‘Fees’, delete the reference to ‘within an academic year’ and insert in full ‘*If deferring any 6 month period, 60% fees apply to the most relevant year of deferral.*’
- Under the heading ‘Deferral should be approved in advance’, insert ‘for a valid reason’ i.e. this should read ‘*Retrospective deferrals will only be considered in exceptional cases, where the student, for a valid reason, was unable to engage with the deferral process.*’
- Under the head ‘Funding implication’, insert a further bullet point ‘*Students are responsible for obtaining the GSO stamp on the form.*’
- At the end of the form under ‘Process’ add:
 - ‘*For a 6-month deferral, the student must engage with the PGR2 process.*’
 - ‘*The onus is on the student to re-engage with the university, once the deferral period is complete.*’

9. National Framework Draft

This item was deferred.

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

- 10.1 GRSB2014/A8/10.1, School of Biotechnology
Approved
- 10.2 GRSB2014/A8/10.2, School of Biotechnology
Approved
- 10.3 GRSB2014/A8/10.3, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved
- 10.4 GRSB2014/A8/10.4, School of Communications
Approved
- 10.5 GRSB2014/A8/10.5, School of Communications
Approved
- 10.6 GRSB2014/A8/10.6, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved subject to the provision of a more detailed and specific report which reflects a more robust engagement with the process.
- 10.7 GRSB2014/A8/10.7, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 10.8 GRSB2014/A8/10.8, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 10.9 GRSB2014/A8/10.9, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved subject to the provision of a more detailed and specific report which reflects a more robust engagement with the process.

- 10.10 GRSB2014/A8/10.10, School of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering
Approved
- 10.11 GRSB2014/A8/10.11, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved
- 10.12 GRSB2014/A8/10.12, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved subject to the provision of a more detailed report

11. Appointment of External Examiners

- 11.1 GRSB2014/A8/11.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Professor Michael Morris, University College Cork
Approved
- 11.2 GRSB2014/A8/11.2, PhD, School of Computing
Professor Joe Carthy, University College Dublin
Approved
- 11.3 GRSB2014/A8/EdD, Education Department, SPD
Professor Jeff Adams, University of Chester
Approved
- 11.4 GRSB2014/A8/EdD, Education Department, SPD
Dr Pádraig Hogan, Maynooth University
Approved
- 11.5 GRSB2014/A8/11.5, EdD, Education Department, SPD
Professor Dympna Devine, University College Dublin
Approved
- 11.6 GRSB2014/A8/11.6, EdD, Education Department, SPD
Dr Micheal Shevlin, Trinity College Dublin
Approved
- 11.7 GRSB2014/A8/11.7, EdD, Education Department, SPD
Dr Aisling Leavy, University of Limerick
Approved
- 11.8 GRSB2014/A8/11.8, School of Law and Government
Dr Cillian McBride, Queen's University Belfast
Approved
- 11.9 GRSB2014/A8/11.9, PhD, All Hallows College
Dr Nicola Slee, University of Birmingham
Approved
- 11.10 GRSB2014/A8/11.10, PhD, All Hallows College
Professor Fiona Timmins, Trinity College Dublin
Approved
- 11.11 GRSB2014/A8/11.11, EdD, School of Education Studies
Dr Paul Donovan, Maynooth University
Approved

12. Other student issues

12.1 Request for admission to 3rd year on the part-time PhD-track register, School of Communications

12.1.1 GRSB201/A8/12.1.1, School of Communications
Approved

12.2 Transfer Application from All Hallows College

12.2.1 GRSB2014/A8/12.2.1, All Hallows College

This item was deferred pending receipt of further documentation from student.

13 AOB

13.1 The Chair indicated that she and R. Keegan were working on a proposal on the quality assurance of Graduate Training Elements (GTE) where such modules were not part of an accredited programme. This proposal will be brought to GRSB for discussion at a later date.

13.2 A change to the date of the next meeting was proposed due to the unavailability of the Chair. A number of alternative dates were suggested, and it was agreed that 21st January 2015 would be the most likely option. It was agreed that formal notification would issue at a later date.

13.3 G. Barry wished GRSB to note that due to a change in instructions from Revenue to DCU Finance Office, on the taxation of External Examiner fees, there had been an undue delay during the summer in the payment of External Examiners. It was noted that expenses in particular should be, and generally are, paid in a timely manner.

End

Date of next meeting:

**Wednesday 21 January 2015
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____