

## **GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD**

### **MINUTES**

Thursday 21 May 2015

9.00 – 11.20 in A204

**Present:** Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry, Professor Liam Barry, Ms Lisa Buckley, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Dr Patricia Flynn, Ms Rachel Keegan, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Dr Mary Rose Sweeney, Dr Ana Terrés, Professor Kevin Rafter, Dr Blanaid White, Dr Tracy Dixon (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Dr Mary Ivers, Mr Brian Harman, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Dr Tim McCormac, Dr Caroline McMullan, Mr Ronan Tobin

**In Attendance:** Dr Teresa Hogan attended for Item 4

### **SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### **1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted, subject to the following:

- The addition of a PGR3 Application for transfer to the PhD Register or confirmation on the PhD Register: GRSB2015/A4/8.6, School of Biotechnology
- The addition of a PGR4 Notice of Intention to Submit for Examination: GRSB2015/A4/9.20, School of Biotechnology
- The addition of the following items under AOB:
  - Structured pathways
  - Thanks to Professor Liam Barry

## **2. Minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2015**

The minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2015 were approved and signed.

## **3. Matters arising from the minutes of 16 April 2015**

- 3.1** It was noted that a sentence has been added to Section 8.3 of the proposed *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* to be considered at the next meeting of University Standards Committee on 28 May 2015.
- 3.2** 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).
- 3.3** 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 had been completed. (Item 3.7, originally raised 8 Sept 2015 as item 9.16).
- 3.4** It was noted that the PGR3 form (School of Nursing and Human Sciences) where a more detailed report was requested is ongoing (Item 3.8, item originally raised at 11 December meeting as Item 10.12).
- 3.5** It was noted that work is ongoing in relation to the proposal for the E-portfolio for Research Students (Item 3.9).
- 3.6** It was noted that the correction to an abstract attached to the PGR4 Form for a student in the School of Chemical Sciences is not yet complete (Item 3.10, Item 11.2, 21 Jan 2015).
- 3.7** It was noted that a PGR4 form the School of Chemical Sciences had been approved by Chair's Action on 14 April 2015 (ref A3/10.58).
- 3.8** It was noted with respect to School of Biotechnology appointments where both external examiners appeared to be from the same School in the same institution, which contravened the regulations, that one of the external examiners had, in fact, a different affiliation, which was not known at the time of the decision of GR SB. Both PGR4 forms were deemed approved (Items 10.8 and 10.9).
- 3.9** It was noted that for a candidate in the School of Biotechnology, where a second extern was required, an additional external examiner was proposed and approved by Chair's Action on 8 May 2015 (Item 10.8).

- 3.10** It was noted that PGR form for the School of Electronic Engineering which had not been approved has been re-submitted (Item 10.27).
- 3.11** It was noted that Registry have checked with the School of Health and Human Performance if there is an examiner in closer proximity (Item 10.33)
- 3.12** It was noted that with respect to the PGR4 form approved for All Hallows College, it was confirmed that notwithstanding institutional links, the School does not have previously established links with the appointed examiner (Item 10.56).

## **SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES**

### **4. Proposed Graduate Training Elements**

#### *4.1 Laboratory Tutoring, GS607*

An anomaly whereby GRBSB's recommendation regarding credit weighting of GS607 conflicted with previous approval for a module in the School of Chemical Sciences was discussed. Dr B White provided detail on the work undertaken over the three-year timeframe of the module, and emphasised the focus on continual new learning with the aim to build and develop the student as a peer-mentor. She also outlined the context whereby some students who already have a background in Education to Master's level, may not require GS602 to engage with GS607, however, the co-ordinators do recommend it for most students.

Subject to the module descriptor being modified to include greater detail regarding the spiral nature of learning (in content) and improved clarity on the management of assessment evaluation, the module was approved with the specifications that:

- The module will have a 10 credit weighting.
- The complementary module GS602 Postgraduate Tutoring Principles and Practice, will be referenced in the GS607 Module Descriptor as a recommendation rather than as a co-requisite.

#### *4.2 Software Defined Networking and Future Internet Technologies, EE610*

The module was approved, subject to more specific detail being added to the description of coursework in the 'Coursework Breakdown' section of the module descriptor.

#### 4.3 *Writing Support Modules, GS608, GS609, GS610*

The Chair gave a brief summary of the working-group processes leading up to the development of the suite of writing support modules, and the response of the developers to the Board's most recent recommendations.

##### 4.3a *Academic Writing for Researchers, GS608*

Dr T. Hogan gave an overview of the precursor module, 'Constructing a Research Thesis', which has been consistently well received by students since its introduction in 2007. The rationale for reframing the module is to facilitate wider uptake, and localised implementation. A discussion took place on the detail of the purpose and merit of such modules. The Chair stressed the need for agreement to be reached on a set of Learning Outcomes, to enable the initiative to progress, for an External Examiner to be appointed and for discussions to be held with the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) on how best to support staff in module delivery.

A discussion ensued about revising the proposed title of the module to better reflect the content and its focus on the process of structuring a thesis.

The following was agreed:

- The Learning Outcomes, credit weighting of 5 ECTS, and level 9 were approved. Ms R Keegan will follow-up with the module co-ordinators in the Schools of Health and Human Performance, Chemical Sciences and Electronic Engineering to request revision of their indicative content to align with the Learning Outcomes approved.
- The module title will be changed to 'Strategies for Academic Writing'.
- The module can be added to GTE academic structures for 2015/16.
- GSO will arrange for the appointment of an External Examiner.
- The Chair will liaise with the TEU to design supports for staff implementing the module in the coming academic year.

##### 4.3b *Getting Research Published, GS609*

A discussion took place around the question of double-counting of learning. It was accepted that the module involves an additional level of learning to the work of writing and publishing papers (which is often inherent to PhD education and reflected in the assessment of the related thesis), and focuses additionally on the publishing process, reflection on that process and responding to peer review.

The following was agreed:

- The module title will be changed to ‘Strategies for Getting Research Published’.
- No less than 50% of the coursework breakdown will be assigned to the Reflective Journal element.
- The module can be added to GTE academic structures for 2015/16.
- GSO will arrange for the appointment of an External Examiner.
- The Chair will liaise with the TEU to design supports for staff implementing the module in the coming academic year

#### 4.3c *Grant Writing for Researchers, GS610*

The following was agreed:

- The module title will be changed to ‘Strategies for Grant Writing’.
- The module can be added to GTE academic structures for 2015/16.
- GSO will arrange for the appointment of an External Examiner.

#### 4.4 *Postgraduate Tutoring Principles and Practice, GS602*

The revised descriptor, which includes an increase in module contact hours was approved, as proposed. It was agreed that the modality of module delivery would be explored by GSO with reference to the needs of part-time students.

### 5. **Incorporation and Graduate Research**

Dr G. Flynn and Dr P. Flynn reported on the activity taking place in relation to Incorporation as follows:

- Recent information sessions hosted by the Research and People and Organisation Workstreams were very informative.
- Fee and scholarship information has been uploaded to the websites for students and supervisors.
- The work of the PGR subgroup of the Student Experience Workstream is ongoing in relation to first year students in 2015 and continuing research students from 2016.
- Work is progressing on structured pathways.

- One prospective research student has been approved by St Patrick's College to proceed to a PAC application. A further seven proposals will be considered at the SPD Research Committee meeting scheduled for 9 June 2015, along with any others received before the closing date on 29 May 2015. One proposal will be considered by Mater Dei at their Research Committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

## **6. Joint Award Agreement with Maynooth (3U)**

The Chair sought feedback on a draft joint research award agreement with Maynooth University (MU), which had been developed in consultation with MU Graduate Studies Office.

The ensuing discussion raised the following issues:

- The need for oversight of all joint awards within the university was noted. The Chair indicated that such awards were a matter of current interest within the IUA, and it was agreed that the Chair and Ms G Barry would liaise to progress this issue.
- It was also noted that the parchment design will need to be negotiated with MU / NUI, and processes around registration protocols, inter-institutional communication and data sharing need to be developed. It was agreed that the Graduate Studies Office will work with Registry to develop these details.

The academic and regulatory details of the proposed agreement were approved.

## **7. Graduate researcher contribution to academic activities**

The Chair raised the subject of research student contributions to academic activities, and related issues including payments to students and variances in expectation across Schools of the required levels of contribution, and types of activities. Such activities are a recognised part of researcher development however; the university should consider the demands made on research students. Revenue guidelines indicate that scholarships are paid on the basis of research students being engaged on a full time basis and there not being an element of service. Irish Research Council funded students can undertake no more than 50 hours per academic term under the terms of their scholarships, and across the IUA a maximum of six hours per week total effort during semester is the normal maximum expectation of research students. UCC has a guidance document to ensure best practice in terms of the types of duties permitted, and UCD use a

process similar to DCU's staff request form for authorising payments, but which details terms and conditions of appointment.

A discussion took place and it was agreed that the University should set a maximum number of hours for contributions to academic activities to be undertaken by research students as part of their development, without necessitating a HR contract. The Chair agreed to revert with a proposal regarding hours, and to raise the issue of payment with the Internal Auditor, and also with Heads of School and the Finance Office.

### **SECTION C: Individual student issues**

#### **8. Applications for transfer to the PhD Register or confirmation on the PhD Register**

- 8.1 GRSB2015/A4/8.1, School of Biotechnology  
Approved
- 8.2 GRSB2015/A4/8.2, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved
- 8.3 GRSB2015/A4/8.3, School of Computing  
Approved
- 8.4 GRSB2015/A4/8.4, School of Electronic Engineering  
Approved, subject to improving the specificity and detail included in the oral report in Section B (ii), and modification of the final sentence which implies an assessment of the outcome at award stage, not appropriate at confirmation stage.
- 8.5 GRSB2015/A4/8.5, School of Mathematical Sciences  
Approved, subject to improving the specificity and detail included in the oral report in Section B (ii).
- 8.6 GRSB2015/A4/8.6, School of Biotechnology  
Approved, subject to confirmation that the report in Section A is agreed jointly by both examiners.

## **9. Appointment of external examiners**

- 9.1 GRSB2015/A4/9.1, PhD, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Dr Niall Ó Ciosáin, NUI Galway  
Dr Mark Fitzgerald, DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama  
Approved
- 9.2 GRSB2015/A4/9.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology  
Dr Aoife Boyd, NUI Galway  
Approved
- 9.3 GRSB2015/A4/9.3, PhD, DCU Business School  
Professor Brian Fynes, University College Dublin  
Professor Louis Brennan, Trinity College Dublin  
Approved
- 9.4 GRSB2015/A4/9.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences  
Professor Peter Dockery, NUI Galway  
Approved
- 9.5 GRSB2015/A4/9.5, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences  
Professor Jonathan Gibbins, University of Reading  
Approved
- 9.6 GRSB2015/A4/9.6, MSc, School of Chemical Sciences  
Dr Fintan Kelleher, IT Tallaght  
Approved
- 9.7 GRSB2015/A4/9.7, MSc, School of Chemical Sciences  
Professor David McCalley, University of the West of England  
Approved
- 9.8 GRSB2015/A4/9.8, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences  
Professor Richard Compton, University of Oxford  
Approved
- 9.9 GRSB2015/A4/9.9, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences  
Dr Derek Irvine, University of Nottingham  
Approved



- 9.10 GRSB2015/A4/9.10, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences  
Professor Paul Milner, University of Leeds  
Approved
- 9.11 GRSB2015/A4/9.11, PhD, School of Computing  
Professor Joemon Jose, University of Glasgow  
Approved
- 9.12 GRSB2015/A4/9.12, PhD, School of Computing  
Dr Aoife Cahill, Educational Testing Services, USA  
Approved, given the strong academic case for the nominee but, in reference to the regulations and requirements of an appropriate level of independence, subject to the appointment of a second external examiner to provide an additional layer of independent assurance consistent with that used for members of staff of the university.
- 9.13 GRSB2015/A4/9.13, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
Professor Thomas Eibert, Technical University of Munich  
Approved
- 9.14 GRSB2015/A4/9.14, PhD, School of Nursing and Human Sciences  
Dr Edward McCann, Trinity College Dublin  
Approved
- 9.15 GRSB2015/A4/9.15, PhD, School of Physical Sciences  
Dr John Quinn, University College Dublin  
Approved
- 9.16 GRSB2015/A4/9.16, PhD, School of Physical Sciences  
Professor Denis Noel Buckley, University of Limerick  
Approved
- 9.17 GRSB2015/A4/9.17, PhD, Department of Education, SPD  
Dr Conchúr Ó Ciollagáin, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Scotland  
Approved. Internal Examiner was also approved subject to confirmation that the panel as a whole has sufficient examination experience.
- 9.18 GRSB2015/A4/9.18, EdD, Department of Education, SPD  
Dr Tracy Cross, The College of William and Mary, USA  
Approved

9.19 GRSB2015/A4/9.19, PhD, School of Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education  
Dr Patricia Kieran, University of Limerick  
Approved

9.20 GRSB2015/A4/9.20, PhD, School of Biotechnology  
Professor Frederico Ferreira, University of Lisbon, Portugal  
Approved

**10. Other student issues**

There were no items.

**11. Any other business**

*11.1 Graduate Research Guide*

The *Graduate Research Guide* is currently being revised for 2015/16 and suggestions were invited for amendments and / or updates. In particular, it was agreed that Ms R Keegan will liaise with Students Awards and Student Enrolment in Registry.

*11.2 Structured pathways*

The Chair reminds colleagues that it is expected that structured pathways will be submitted for noting to the next meeting of GRSB on 25 June 2015.

**11.3 Thanks to Professor L Barry**

On behalf of the Board the Chair expressed thanks to Prof L Barry for his considerable contribution to GRSB during his term as Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing.

**Date of next meeting:**

Thursday 25 June 2015 9.00 a.m. in A204

*End*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_