

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday 23 January 2014

9.00-10.25 a.m. in A204

Present: Dr Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry, Professor Liam Barry, Ms Lisa Buckley, Ms Goretti Daughton, Dr Bernadette Flanagan, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Dr Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Dr Ekaterina Kozina, Ms Ann McCartney, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Enda McGlynn, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Dr Kevin Rafter, Dr Ana Terrés, Dr Blánaid White

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one additional submission under Item 9 and two submissions under Item 11.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 28 November 2013

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted that the *DCU Guidebook for Research Students* would be made available as soon as possible. (Item 3.3)

- 3.2** Noted that a revised module descriptor for a GTE had been made available by the School of Computing, that it needed to be ascertained whether or not a second revised module descriptor was available, and that both would be reviewed together. (Item 3.4)
- 3.3** Noted that the following matters were for ongoing development and would be reported on to the GRBSB as and when appropriate:
- the plans to make the PGR2 (annual progress report) process available on line across the University (Item 3.5)
 - the provision of YouTube videos for recruitment purposes (Item 3.6)
 - the alignment of information on DORAS and ISS in respect of supervisors' areas of expertise (Item 3.7)
 - a change to the PGR3 form to allow for reference to 'Name(s) of Supervisor(s)' (Item 7)
 - the fitness for purpose of the current references to deferral and cessation of registration in *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* (Item 9).
- 3.4** Noted that a revised PGR3 form, with a sentence deleted as requested by the GRBSB, was awaited from a School. (Item 3.9)
- 3.5** Noted that a revised PGR3 form, completed in appropriate detail and containing assurances as requested by the GRBSB, was awaited from a School. (Item 3.11)
- 3.6** Noted that a PGR3 form, revised as requested by the GRBSB, was awaited from a School. (Item 3.12)
- 3.7** Noted that a form for requesting extensions to registration would be devised. (Item 3.15)
- 3.8** With respect to the HEA/QQI Engagement Document on the National Framework for Doctoral Education, the Chair noted that submissions had been made both by DCU and by the IUA Deans of Graduate Studies. The Deans had also been invited, at a meeting with the HEA on 16 December 2013, to redraft the principles outlined in the document, and had done so. The Document is expected to be approved by the HEA in late February 2014 and to be launched in March 2014. The HEA is expected to avail of information available from the discussions on compacts to inform further work arising from the Document. QQI is due to carry out a review of the fitness for purpose of the current guidance on the quality indicators pertaining to doctoral education, with revised guidance expected to be made available in 2015. (Item 3.16)
- 3.9** Noted, with respect to processes and templates for collaborative research supervision, that the Chair and Dr Terrés had met Mr Richard Stokes, Director of Invent, and that it had been agreed to include in relevant documentation a reference to the possibility of more than one collaborative agreement with respect to a student

- being supervised as well as a reference to the possibility that the Dean of Faculty can nominate alternates to manage certain aspects of an agreement. Noted that the Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar) had advised that the relevant revised documentation could be submitted for the consideration of the Education Committee rather than Executive, and that this would be done. (Item 3.17)
- 3.10** Noted that the revised provisions and regulations on Higher Doctorates had been approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 11 December 2013 and would be implemented as and when necessary. (Item 3.18)
- 3.11** Noted that the proposal with respect to the award of MPhil was in the process of being redrafted and resubmitted to the Chair with a view to being discussed in Faculties prior to further consideration by the GRSB. (Item 3.19)
- 3.12** Noted that the wording of Section 1a of a PGR3 form had been modified and the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 3.23)
- 3.13** Noted that a nomination of an additional external examiner for a student was awaited from a School. (Item 3.27)
- 3.14** Noted that the event to mark the Daniel O’Hare Scholarships had taken place on 15 January 2014, with Dr O’Hare himself in attendance, and that it had been well received. Noted that the call for submissions in respect of the 2014/15 Scholarships would be launched at an appropriate time, though the amount of funding available was still under discussion. (Item 5.2)
- 3.15** Noted that a nomination for an external examiner had been withdrawn by a School. (Item 8.3)
- 3.16** Noted that a full list of publications, and dates, had been provided by a School with respect to a nominated external examiner and that the nomination had been approved by Chair’s action on 5 December 2013. (Item 8.8)
- 3.17** Noted that details about supervision experience in respect of a nominated external examiner were awaited from a School. (Item 8.9)
- 3.18** Noted that a Head of School had expressed disquiet at a decision of the GRSB to request that an alternative internal examiner to the original nominee be identified in respect of a student. (Item 8.11)
- 3.19** Noted that it had been pointed out to a School that information on card fee issues is not relevant to, and should not form part of, requests for extension to registration. (Item 9.2)

- 3.20** Noted that a renewal of appointment of examiners for a student in the School of Health and Human Performance had been approved by Chair's action on 6 January 2014.
- 3.21** Noted that a renewal of appointment of examiners for a student in the School of Chemical Sciences had been approved by Chair's action on 6 January 2014.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Proposed Graduate Training Elements

4.1 HR601: Leadership in the Research Environment

Approved. Agreed that a small number of typographical inaccuracies would be brought to the attention of the module co-ordinator.

5. Student appeals

5.1 Proposed changes to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* with respect to appeals

Approved subject to the substitution of 'Faculties' for 'disciplines' in section 12.1.3 and the substitution of 'Faculty' for 'discipline' in section 12.1.4. (See also, however, Item 5.2 below). Noted that these changes to *Academic Regulations*, and any others approved by the GRSB, would be submitted for approval to Academic Council at its meeting of 11 June 2014 with a view to implementation in 2014/15.

5.2 Revised advisory note for appellants

Agreed that the words 'uphold the original decision' would be removed from section 5 (e) ii. Noted that the timing and frequency of the meetings of the GRSB appeals standing committee would require further consideration, particularly with respect to the PGR2 (annual progress report) submission date and the schedule of meetings of the Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees. Noted too that the role of the Faculty Awards Boards vis-à-vis the appeals standing committee would need further consideration, particularly with a view to ensuring that the opportunity to appeal would become available after, rather than before, the relevant Faculty Awards Board meeting. The Chair requested the members of the GRSB to submit feedback to her on these issues prior to the meeting of 6 March 2014, with a view to having a revised version of the advisory note ready for consideration at this meeting. She noted that the advisory note, once approved by the GRSB would, like the revised *Academic Regulations*, be submitted for approval to Academic Council

(see Item 5.1 above), and that she would also review the *Academic Regulations* again to ensure full conformity between them and the revised advisory note.

6. Report on the research student exit survey

6.1 Dr Kozina presented the outcomes, noting that the survey had been conducted twice in the previous year, in March 2013 and November 2013, to coincide with graduation ceremonies. In the course of the presentation and the ensuing discussion, the following were noted:

- feedback with respect to supervision and Graduate Training Elements was largely positive
- there may, however, be scope for improving awareness of the opportunities afforded by GTEs available in institutions other than DCU
- there may also be scope for improving awareness of postdoctoral opportunities, approaches to career planning and the IUA's *Irish Universities' PhD Graduates' Skills*.

6.2 The Chair noted that the questions in the survey had been drawn up by a cross-sectoral group. She also alluded to the importance of emphasising, in undertaking the surveys, the mapping of measurable improvements over time in terms of the student experience.

6.3 A discussion took place on the importance of ensuring a high level of student engagement with surveys while respecting the need to minimise stress for them at the end of their studies. It was noted that financial inducements might prove helpful. The Chair requested that the members of the GRSB contact her with any suggestions they might have.

6.4 The Chair, on behalf of the GRSB, expressed appreciation to Dr Kozina for her work in relation to the surveys.

7. For noting: revisions to the Doctorate in Psychotherapy

Noted. Noted too that very considerable work had been undertaken to prepare the revisions. Agreed that it would be mentioned to the programme team that some operational issues would need to be discussed with Registry and that the use of the term 'minor' to describe the dissertation would benefit from reconsideration. Noted that, in the event of an appeal against the result of a taught module, the procedures for appealing the results of taught modules/programmes would be used.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

8. Applications for transfer to the PhD register or confirmation on the PhD register

- 8.1 Student ref. GRSB/2014/A1/8.1, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 8.2 Student ref. GRSB/2014/A1/8.2, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 8.3 Student ref. GRSB/2014/A1/8.3, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 8.4 Student ref. GRSB/2014/A1/8.4, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved.

It was agreed that the Registry would (by the meeting of 6 March 2014, if possible) work towards a situation whereby only current versions of forms would be accepted for consideration by the GRSB.

9. Appointment of external examiners

- 9.1 Professor Michael Stear, University of Glasgow
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 9.2 Dr Philip Stiles, University of Cambridge
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.2, PhD, Dublin City University Business School
Approved in respect of the nominated external examiner. It was agreed that DCUBS would be requested to nominate an alternative internal examiner to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. The alternative nomination can, if appropriate, be approved by Chair's action.
- 9.3 Professor Neil Cameron, Durham University
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.3, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 9.4 Dr Tim Taylor, Goldsmiths, University of London
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.4, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 9.5 Professor Susan Stepney, University of York
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.5, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 9.6 Professor Peter Andrekson, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.6, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.

- 9.7 Professor Laurie Cuthbert, Queen Mary University of London
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.7, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved subject to confirmation that appropriate professional distance exists between the nominee and the University. Agreed to raise with the School the issue of the proposed word count for the thesis, which appears low.
- 9.8 Professor Claude Oestges, Université Catholique de Louvain
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.8, MSc, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 9.9 Professor Oliver Richmond, University of Manchester
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.9, PhD, School of Law and Government
Approved.
- 9.10 Professor Brendan O’Leary, University of Pennsylvania
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9.10, PhD, School of Law and Government
Approved.
- 9.11 Dr Adrian-Mario Gellel, University of Malta
Student ref. GRSB2014/A1/9/11, PhD, All Hallows College
Approved.

It was agreed that in due course, following conclusion of current discussions about a number of data protection issues, consideration would be given to amending the PGR4 form to allow for the provision of additional outline information with a view to forestalling possible conflict of interest situations.

With respect to the nomination of external examiners, the principle of drawing from as rich a range of sources as possible, and avoiding inappropriately familiar relationships with particular institutions or departments, was reiterated. It was agreed to propose a change to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* with a view to providing an appropriate level of flexibility while maintaining the principle.

10. Other student issues

None.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 The Chair, on behalf of the GRSB, expressed appreciation to Dr Kozina, who is leaving the Graduate Studies Office, for her work both in the GSO and as a member of the GRSB over the past year.
- 11.2 The Chair, on behalf of the GRSB, congratulated Dr Nic Giolla Mhichíl on the award of her doctorate.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 6 March 2014

9.00 a.m. in A204

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____