

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

19 October 2017

9.30 a.m. - 12.05 p.m. in A204

Present: Dr Joseph Stokes (Chair), Ms Fiona Brennan, Ms Michelle Brennan, Dr Charlotte Holland, Professor David Jacobson, Ms Rachel Keegan, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Professor Eugene McNulty, Ms Roisín Morris-Drennan, Ms Sabrina Smart, Mr Allan Stevenson, Dr Blánaid White

Apologies: Dr Tim McCormac, Dr Caroline McMullan, Dr Mark Roantree, Dr Mary Rose Sweeney

The Chair thanked the outgoing Secretary to the GRSB, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon, for her three years of service, and welcomed the incoming Secretary, Ms Louise McDermott. He thanked Dr Mary Rose Sweeney (who was unavoidably absent) for her contribution to the Board in her capacity as Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Science and Health, noting that her term of office in this role was about to come to an end and, with it, her membership of the Board. He thanked Ms Carol Grehan of Registry for her contribution to the Board and welcomed her successor, Ms Sabrina Smart. He welcomed Ms Fiona Brennan to her first meeting of the Board, in her capacity as representative of the Director of Research Support.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one submission under Item 13.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 4 September 2017

The minutes of the meeting of 4 September 2017 were confirmed subject to the correction of the name of a School to 'School of Law and Government' at Item 3.18. They were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 4 September 2017

- 3.1** Noted that a change had retrospectively been approved, by means of Chair's action on 18 October 2017, to an internal examiner for a *viva voce* examination for a PhD candidate in the School of Chemical Sciences. The examiner originally approved had, for unavoidable reasons, been unable to participate in the examination. (Item 10.11 from the meeting of 5 September 2016)
- 3.2** Noted that the Chair had made a presentation to the Heads' and Deans' group to highlight the importance of ensuring a gender mix on examining panels and that he intended to contact Heads of School individually with a view to drawing up a list of academic staff who might be requested to participate in panels to ensure gender mix. (Item 3.1)
- 3.3** Noted that work was ongoing with respect to preparing guidelines on recital/performance where a research Master's degree through creative/performance practice is undertaken. (See also Item 10.4 below.) (Item 3.6)
- 3.4** Noted that work on the Residing Abroad Principles was ongoing and that a draft document would be prepared and considered by a subgroup of the GRSB with a view to having a revised draft considered by the full Board at a future meeting. (Item 3.7)
- 3.5** Noted that the proposed Joint Supervision Agreement with the University of Southampton was unlikely to be finalised. It is possible that one student who was admitted under this Agreement and who is due to submit the thesis soon will, if successful, be conferred with a DCU award only. (Item 3.8)
- 3.6** Noted that consideration was being given to the optimum way of recognising the Research Integrity Module with respect to students and staff members who complete it. It is unlikely that credits will be awarded for it; rather, something in the nature of a digital badge or distinction may, in due course, be deemed suitable (see also Item 7.3 below). (Item 3.9)
- 3.7** The following changes to membership of the GRSB, which had been made since the membership list 2017/18 was approved, were noted:
- Ms Louise McDermott to replace Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon as Secretary
 - Ms Sabrina Smart to replace Ms Carol Grehan from Registry
 - Ms Fiona Brennan to represent the Research Support Office pending the appointment of a new Director. (Item 5.1)

- 3.8** The following change to membership of the GRSB Standing Committee to Consider Appeals, which had been made since the membership list 2017/18 was approved, was noted:
- Ms Louise McDermott to replace Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon as Secretary. (Item 5.2)
- 3.9** Noted that it had been ascertained that a confirmation examination had been conducted by both the principal supervisor and the internal examiner and that the relevant PGR3 form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 6.1)
- 3.10** Noted, with respect to a confirmation examination, that it had been ascertained that the oral examination had taken place and that a replacement PGR3 form had been made available which contained more detailed information on this examination than had originally been submitted. The form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 6.8)
- 3.11** Noted, with respect to a confirmation examination, that a School had indicated that it had taken place on a date that was appropriate in the context of the submission of the PGR4 form. The relevant PGR3 and PGR4 forms had therefore been deemed approved. Noted too that an alternative Independent Chair had been nominated. (Items 6.11 and 7.20)
- 3.12** Noted that it had been ascertained that a confirmation examination had been conducted by both the principal supervisor and the internal examiner and that the relevant PGR3 form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 6.14)
- 3.13** Noted, with respect to a PGR3 form, that a revised version had been submitted containing more detailed information on the written and oral examinations than had been available in the original and that the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 6.17)
- 3.14** Noted, with respect to a PGR3 form, that a School had confirmed that it had not been a resubmission. (Item 6.19)
- 3.15** Noted, with respect to a PGR3 form, that a School had provided a replacement version containing appropriate wording as requested and that the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 6.20)
- 3.16** Noted, with respect to a PGR3 form, that a School had provided clarification as to what the recommendation was in respect of the candidate and that the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 6.22)
- 3.17** Noted that a revised PGR3 form, containing more detailed reports on the written and oral confirmation examination than had been available in the original, was awaited from a School. (Item 6.26)

- 3.18** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that a replacement Independent Chair had been identified and that the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 7.2)
- 3.19** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that a School had ensured gender mix in the composition of the examining panel for the *viva voce* examination through the appointment of the Independent Chair. (Item 7.3)
- 3.20** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that a School had confirmed that it had not been possible to identify an alternative external examiner nominee from a nearer geographical location than that of the nominee and that the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 7.7)
- 3.21** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that a School had confirmed that the format of the thesis is intended to be monograph. (Item 7.11)
- 3.22** Noted that an external examiner who had been approved had declined the nomination and that a replacement external examiner, Professor Alexandra Georgakopoulou-Nunes of King's College London, had been approved by Chair's action on 4 October 2017. (Item 7.14)
- 3.23** Noted that notification of the appointment of an Independent Chair for a *viva voce* examination was awaited from a School. (Item 7.17)
- 3.24** Noted that a School had been requested to resubmit a PGR4 form on the basis that the original form had been incomplete and had also been requested to address, if possible, the gender mix of the examining panel. (Item 7.21)
- 3.25** With respect to a PGR4 form which had not been approved because the nominated external examiner did not fulfil regulations in terms of independence, noted that a replacement PGR4 form had been submitted. The new nominee as external examiner, Dr Ciarán Mac Donncha of the University of Limerick, was approved subject to the new PGR4 form being signed appropriately. Noted in a general sense that, if a nominee had co-published to a significant extent with a DCU staff member, a case for the nomination, indicating why an alternative nominee could not be sourced, would need to be made to the GRSB. (Item 7.23)
- 3.26** Noted that a School had been requested to resubmit a PGR4 form, as the candidate did not meet minimum registration requirements. (Item 7.24)
- 3.27** Noted that a School had been requested to resubmit a PGR4 form, as the candidate did not meet minimum registration requirements. Noted too that the resubmitted form would need to include an indication of whether or not the candidate is/was a staff member. (Item 7.26)

- 3.28** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that a School had confirmed that the format of the thesis is intended to be monograph. However, as it had been established following the meeting of 4 September 2017 that the relevant PGR3 form had not been considered by the GR SB, this form had been requested. It is in the papers of the present meeting (as Item 9.18). (Item 7.28)
- 3.29** Noted that a School had been requested to nominate an Independent Chair and, if possible, to address the issue of gender mix through the appointment of this Chair. (Item 7.29)
- 3.30** Noted that a School had confirmed that a candidate for examination for PhD is/was not a member of staff. (Item 7.31)
- 3.31** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that a School had confirmed that the format of the thesis is intended to be monograph. (Item 7.34)
- 3.32** Noted, with respect to an external examiner who had been approved subject to clarification of the number of doctoral students supervised to completion, that the information supplied in this respect had been deemed not satisfactory and the nominee had therefore been deemed not approved. Noted that a replacement external examiner, Professor Joost Duflou of Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, had been approved by Chair's action on 3 October 2017. (Item 7.35)
- 3.33** Noted that it had been confirmed that a nominated internal examiner was ineligible to act and that a replacement nomination was awaited. (Item 7.40)
- 3.34** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that a School had confirmed that it had not been possible to identify an alternative external examiner nominee from a nearer geographical location than that of the nominee and that the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 7.46)
- 3.35** Noted that a School had addressed the gender mix of the examining panel for a *viva voce* examination through the appointment of the Independent Chair. (Item 7.47)
- 3.36** Noted that an external examiner who had been approved had declined the nomination and that a replacement external examiner, Dr Vincent Hargaden of University College Dublin, had been approved by Chair's action on 29 September 2017. (Item 7.49)
- 3.37** Noted that a School had nominated an alternative Independent Chair for a *viva voce* examination. (Item 7.50)
- 3.38** Noted that, following submission of an R103 form (Change of Supervisory and/or Panel Member Arrangements), the composition of a supervisory panel had been confirmed and the relevant PGR4 form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 7.51)

- 3.39 Noted, in respect of a form which had been requested in an updated version, that it had been ascertained that such an updated version was not in fact required and that the request for readmission to the research programme had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 8.2)
- 3.40 Noted that a School had submitted a revised PGR14 form, with Sections C and D fully completed, and that it had been deemed approved. (Item 8.7)
- 3.41 Noted that a revised PGR14 form, with Sections C and D fully completed, had been submitted jointly by two Schools and that it had been deemed approved. (Item 8.19)
- 3.42 Noted that a School had submitted a revised PGR14 form, with Sections C and D fully completed, and that it had been deemed approved. (Item 8.23)
- 3.43 Noted that a School had submitted a revised PGR14 form, with Sections C and D fully completed, and that it had been deemed approved. (Item 8.25)
- 3.44 Noted that a request for deferral by a candidate in the School of Biotechnology had been approved retrospectively by Chair's action on 5 September 2017.
- 3.45 Noted that a request for an extension to the maximum registration period on behalf of a PhD candidate in the School of Law and Government had been approved by Chair's action on 5 September 2017.
- 3.46 Noted that a request for an extension to the maximum registration period on behalf of a PhD candidate in the School of Human Development had been approved by Chair's action on 7 September 2017.
- 3.47 Noted that a PGR4 form in respect of a PhD candidate in the School of Physical Sciences had been approved by Chair's action on 7 September 2017. The external examiner is Professor Eleni A. Kyza of Cyprus University of Technology.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Graduate researcher development

4.1 Training for Research Students

The list of training opportunities for research students in Semester 1 2017/18 was noted. The Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research to publicise it in their Faculties. It was noted that the corresponding list for Semester 2 was in the course of preparation and

also that a list of training opportunities for staff for 2017/18 had been drawn up and would be circulated to the members of the GRSB.

5. Draft of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Research Students

5.1 The Chair noted that the draft had been written on the basis of a comparative study of similar surveys in other jurisdictions, particularly the PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey) in the United Kingdom. The ISSE (Irish Survey of Student Engagement – for students on taught programmes) had also been adverted to in the preparation of the draft.

5.2 The Chair requested feedback on the draft from the Associate Deans for Research before the meeting of 30 November 2017, with particular reference to any questions which might be unclear or any which it might be considered particularly important to ask. He noted, however, that changes to the draft were not likely to be extensive because of the importance of benchmarking with existing surveys elsewhere. He noted too that the draft would be tested on small groups of research students across Irish institutions in November/December 2017, that the Deans of Graduate Research would meet in December 2017 to collate the feedback from this exercise and implement it as appropriate and that the full survey would be piloted with all research students in Spring 2018, in tandem with ISSE. He undertook to keep the GRSB informed, on an ongoing basis, with respect to the survey.

5.3 On the issue of differentiating between part-time and full-time research students, the Chair noted that the survey would be populated with relevant demographic data from existing registration information and that participants would not be asked to provide personal data.

5.4 The inception of the survey was welcomed by the members of the GRSB.

6. Proposed amendment to the *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (2017/2018)*

Approved.

7. Report on GRSB activity 2016/2017

7.1 Noted. The Chair congratulated the members of the GRSB and all others who had contributed to the activity of the Board in the period in question, noting that the Board had, during this period, considered various kinds of forms in respect of approximately half of the research student population of the University.

7.2 With respect to one of the items included in the report, i.e. the agreement in respect of a joint doctoral award between DCU and Military University of Technology in Warsaw, Poland, it was noted that it had been approved by MUT on 18 October 2017 and that the award would be made to the relevant student at a conferring ceremony in The Helix in early November 2017.

7.3 It was noted, with respect to the Research Integrity Module, that the position of the Faculties was that it would be mandatory for all newly-appointed academic staff and recommended, though not mandatory, for all existing academic staff. It was noted too that discussions on the desirability of completing modules of this kind are ongoing at national level. (See also Item 3.6 above.)

8. DCU Retired Staff Research Agreement/Emeritus Professor

8.1 DCU Retired Staff Research Agreement

Noted that this draft document had previously been made available to the Associate Deans for Research with a request that they consider it. Noted that, if approved by the relevant University committees, it would generate a contract and a timeline in respect of research activity, which the title 'Emeritus' *per se* does not. Noted that, if approved, the Agreement was intended to be implemented on an exceptional basis only and would not be implemented on a retrospective basis. Noted that, if approved, it would apply to existing supervisory commitments and would remain in force until the final student had been supervised to completion. Agreed that Ms Fiona Brennan would ascertain with colleagues in the Research Support Office the extent to which consideration had been given to asking students to confirm their willingness to be supervised by a retired staff member. The need to ascertain the implications for the *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* in the event of approval of the Agreement was noted.

8.2 DCU Emeritus Professorships Policy

Agreed that it would be desirable to include in this draft policy a stipulation that the full GRSB, rather than the Dean of Graduate Studies alone, make recommendations in respect of the DCU Retired Staff Research Agreement.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

The Chair drew the attention of the GRSB to the fact that updated PGR forms were now available for use in 2017/18 and that previous versions of forms should not be used. He requested that the Associate Deans for Research supplement the information on this (circulated by Registry) by issuing reminders to the Faculty Research Committees.

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

9.1 GRSB2017/A7/9.1, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.

9.2 GRSB2017/A7/9.2, School of Biotechnology
Approved.

9.3 GRSB2017/A7/9.3, School of Biotechnology
Agreed that the School would be asked to nominate an alternative independent panel member to ensure compliance with regulations. Agreed that the eligibility of the nominated internal examiner would need to be ascertained and that, if this examiner is not eligible, the transfer examination would have to be held again with a different internal examiner (though it would be open to the School, as an alternative, to make a special case to the GRSB in respect of the original nominee). Agreed that, at all events, this original nominee should not act as internal examiner at the time of the PhD examination. Agreed that the School would be asked to resubmit the PGR3 form for the consideration of the meeting of 30 November 2017 and that, in addition to the above stipulations, the reports on the written and oral examinations would need to be more detailed than is the case at present.

9.4 GRSB2017/A7/9.4, School of Biotechnology
Approved subject to confirmation of the membership of the examining panel and of the appropriateness of this membership, and subject also to the resubmission of the PGR3 form with an indication that the full panel, and not just one member, had participated in both the written and the oral examinations of the candidate.

9.5 GRSB2017/A7/9.5, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved.

9.6 GRSB2017/A7/9.6, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.

9.7 GRSB2017/A7/9.7, PhD, School of Computing
Approved subject to the resubmission of the PGR3 form with a more detailed report on the oral examination than is available at present.

- 9.8** GRSB2017/A7/9.8, PhD, School of Computing
Approved subject to the resubmission of the PGR3 form with a more detailed report on the written examination than is available at present.
- 9.9** GRSB2017/A7/9.9, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 9.10** GRSB2017/A7/9.10, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 9.11** GRSB2017/A7/9.11, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 9.12** GRSB2017/A7/9.12, PhD, School of Computing
Approved subject to the resubmission of the PGR3 form with a more detailed report on the oral examination than is available at present, and subject also to the inclusion in this report of a statement that the candidate is capable of working at PhD level.
- 9.13** GRSB2017/A7/9.13, PhD, School of Computing
Approved subject to the resubmission of the PGR3 form with a more detailed report on the oral examination than is available at present.
- 9.14** GRSB2017/A6/9.14, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 9.15** GRSB2017/A7/9.15, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Agreed to allow the candidate to undergo a further confirmation examination, to take place within six months and to be reported on to the GRSB not later than the meeting of 26 April 2018. Noted that the Chair would discuss this matter with the Head of School. Agreed that Registry would ascertain the availability of the PGR3 form relating to the candidate's original confirmation examination in 2016 and would pursue the matter of the completion of the PGR2 form and the consequent registration of the candidate for 2017/18 (the PGR2 form not having been completed pending the outcome of the consideration of the present PGR3 form).
- 9.16** GRSB2017/A6/9.16, PhD, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge
Approved.

9.17 GR SB2017/A7/9.17, PhD, School of Law and Government
Agreed that the School would be asked to resubmit the form for the consideration of the meeting of 30 November 2017 and that the revised form would need to include a statement that the confirmation examination had taken place in the normal way and, if it did, that it had involved the full examining panel (and the exact composition of this panel would need to be clarified also). Additionally, the reports on the written and oral examinations (provided these had taken place) would need to be more detailed than is the case at present.

9.18 GR SB2017/A7/9.18, PhD, School of Law and Government
Approved.

9.19 GR SB2017/A7/9.19, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.

Noted that the School of Computing had required some candidates to present before an audience, either instead of or in addition to an examining panel. The Chair undertook to discuss with the relevant Associate Dean for Research a number of issues arising from this, including the implications for consistency of treatment of candidates and the relationship between the date of the presentation to the audience (where this took place) and the presentation to the examining panel. The practice of appointing two internal examiners to examining panels, rather than one, would also be raised.

10. Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)

10.1 GR SB2017/A7/10.1, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Dr Shane Knox, HSE National Ambulance Service College
Approved.

10.2 GR SB2017/A7/10.2, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Dr Joan Walton, York St. John University
Approved.

10.3 GR SB2017/A7/10.3, PhD, School of Mathematical Sciences
Professor Sjoerd Verduyn Lunel, Utrecht University
Approved.

10.4 GR SB2017/A7/10.4, PhD, Dundalk Institute of Technology
Professor Joshua Dickson, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Approved. Noted that, as the new 2017/2018 PGR4 form provides an opportunity to indicate early appointment of examiners for creative/performance practice components, there would be no need for future such requests to be accompanied by an explanatory memorandum. Noted that capacity was only now being built in the University in relation

to examining such components and that issues relevant to this would be raised in the course of the preparation of the guidelines on recital/performance (see also Item 3.3 above).

- 10.5** GRBSB2017/A7/10.5, LLM, School of Law and Government
Dr Anna Marie Brennan, University of Liverpool
Approved subject to confirmation that the nominated external examiner has experience sufficient to ensure compliance with regulations.

11. Notice of Intention to Reside/Carry out Research Abroad (PGR13)

- 11.1** GRBSB2017/A7/11.1, PhD, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved.

- 11.2** GRBSB2017/A7/11.2, PhD, School of English
Agreed that the School would be asked to resubmit the form for consideration at the meeting of 30 November 2017. Agreed that, prior to this, Professor McNulty would raise with the School the issues that had arisen for the GRBSB, to include: the reason the candidate wishes to study in DCU rather than at a local university in her home country; the reason the candidate wishes to study full time rather than part time; the implications of remote study for the candidate in terms of access to academic resources and student support services; the intended level and frequency of access to DCU.

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

- 12.1** GRBSB2017/A7/12.1, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved with respect both to re-admission and to the extension of the registration period to cover 2017/18 and 2018/19. Noted that the registration mode should have been indicated on the form as full time, as the relevant question refers to past and not intended future study.
- 12.2** GRBSB2017/A7/12.2, PhD, School of History and Geography
Approved. Noted that it would be desirable, though not mandatory, for a supervisory panel to be established for the candidate.
- 12.3** GRBSB2017/A7/12.3, PhD, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved.

13. Other student issues

13.1 GR SB/2017/A7/13.1, MSc/PhD, School of Nursing and Human Sciences

A request for registration on both the Master's and PhD track at the same time, for a short period, was approved in view of the unusual circumstances that obtain. Agreed that, following graduation with the Master's degree on 24 March 2018, the candidate would be transferred to the PhD register and that there would be no need for a request for transfer to be submitted to the GR SB.

14. Any other business

None.

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 30 November 2017

at 9.30 a.m. in A204