

CARD FEE 2025-26 – Terms and Conditions

N.B. There are a number of important terms and conditions linked with the approval of, and eligibility for, the card fee. The applicant and supervisory panel should ensure that they understand these and take the necessary actions in a timely manner. Failure to do so will result in non-eligibility for the card fee and liability, either by the School or the applicant, for full fees for the academic year.

Please review the summary of actions required and read the terms and conditions below carefully and ensure appropriate action is taken.

Card Fee: Summary of Actions Required

Applicants must:

- 1. Having consulted and gained approval from the Principal Supervisor(s), submit a **CARD FEE DECLARATION FORM** to GSO (graduatestudiesoffice@dcu.ie) by **Friday 27th June 2025**.**
- 2. Pay €150 for the Card Fee to Fees by **Friday 25th July 2025**. Alternatively include a subcost code for fees on the Card Fee Declaration Form. See notes provided by Fees on **How to Make a Pre Payment** at the following [link](#)**
- 3. Submit a *PGR4 Intention to Submit Thesis for Examination* to Registry (postgraduate.research@dcu.ie) by **Thursday 31st July 2025** for the August GRSB meeting.**
- 4. Where students have exceeded the DCU Maximum Registration Period (see table below) a **PGR14** will need to be submitted to Registry (postgraduate.research@dcu.ie) by **Thursday 31st July** for the August GRSB meeting.**

What is the Card Fee?

The Card Fee is a scheme run by the Graduate Studies Office (GSO), in cooperation with Registry, including the Student Fees Team. It facilitates a student's progression through **the closing stages** of their research degree, i.e. within the last five months prior to submission, by enabling them - when qualifying conditions are met - to avail of a significantly reduced fee instead of the usual fee associated with their year of study. The Card Fee for 2025-26 is €150.

Who can apply?

Students who are coming to the end of their master's or doctoral research and whose thesis for examination will be submitted between **Monday 1st September and Friday 5th December 2025** are allowed to make an application for the Card Fee. Applications should be made on the basis that the student is realistically within five months of submission of an examination copy of the thesis, and this is confirmed by the principal supervisor(s) by signing the application form. If this is not a realistic objective, then the card fee scheme is not appropriate and should not be used. **Requests for once-off extensions to the card fee deadline will normally not be approved.**

What happens if the student does not meet the deadline?

If a thesis is submitted after the advertised card fee deadline, the student or School becomes liable for **full year academic fees**. In submitting the form, the School approves in advance the budget code against which the fees will be charged.

Note that to apply for the Card Fee, students must be in good standing with respect to their research fees by the end of the 2024-25 academic year.

Am I eligible?

The table below outlines research student eligibility for the Card Fee, calculated on year of registration. Those students with mixed full-time/part-time registration periods over the course of their study should contact the GSO (graduatestudiesoffice@dcu.ie) to establish exact period of registration:

Cohort	Year of registration in 2025-26 to be eligible for Card Fee	DCU Maximum Registration Period	Fee payment requirements for Card Fee
PhD full-time <i>Mixed registration or deferred study periods contact GSO</i>	Years 5+	5 years	Must have paid at least 4 years full-time fees
PhD part-time <i>Mixed registration or deferred study periods - contact GSO</i>	Years 6+	7 years	Must have paid at least 5 years part-time
Masters by research full-time <i>Mixed registration or deferred study periods - contact GSO</i>	Years 3+	3 years	Must have paid at least 2 years full-time fees

Masters by research part-time <i>Mixed registration or deferred study periods - contact GSO</i>	Years 4+	5 years	Must have paid at least 3 years part-time fees
Professional Doctorate	Years 5+	6 years	Must have paid at least 2 years full-time & 2 years part-time fees

What's the difference between eligibility and qualification for the Card Fee?

Qualification as a Card Fee student for 2025-26 is finally confirmed upon submission of the thesis for examination in the format required by Registry by **Friday 5th December**. Applicants who submit by the deadline and therefore qualify for the Card Fee do not receive confirmation of this from the GSO but GSO will contact Fees on their behalf to ensure that the applicant's fee status for 2025-26 is updated.

Do I have to do the Annual Progress Review if I'm hoping to avail of the card fee?

To be eligible for the card fee, continuing research students must engage with the annual progress review by the end of June and the supervisory panel must have agreed a positive recommendation for registration for the next academic year, with sign off by Head of School. Normal exceptions to the Annual Progress Review apply (see [here](#)).

Do I have to register If I'm hoping to avail of the Card Fee?

Yes, these are two distinct processes. There are a number of considerations on registration to keep in mind:

(1) Even if the student has applied for the card fee for the coming academic year, **THEY ARE STILL REQUIRED TO REGISTER IN AUGUST FOR THAT ACADEMIC YEAR**. Failure to register on time will result in the student being ineligible for the card fee. Please note that applying for the card fee does not mean that the student has registered.

(2) If a student's registration period will hit and exceed the **Maximum Registration Period**, as outlined in the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees, a PGR14 form also needs to be submitted to Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) for approval. Supervisory panels are responsible for ensuring that the **PGR14 form is submitted to the August GRSB – two weeks in advance of the meeting date**. Failure to do this could result in ineligibility for the card fee and in the thesis submission being rejected by Registry. Please consult Registry's website for current information on deadlines for submission of forms for the August GRSB.

(3) Students and supervisors should discuss whether the student should register as a part-time or full-time student during the PGR2 annual progress review in May/June. As outlined in the regulations, **retrospective changes to registration status are not permitted** during the academic year, so it is important to get this information right when registering in September. Requests to change registration status when coming up to the card fee deadline will not be approved.

Do I have to have submitted the PGR4 form to avail of the Card Fee?

Yes. The PGR4 form is the form where the student and supervisory panel provide at least three months' notice of intention to submit the thesis for examination.

If applying for card fees status, it is imperative that the three months' notice of intention to submit the thesis has been approved by GRSB no later than the GRSB scheduled for August 2025. The thesis will not be accepted by Registry if the PGR4 form has not been submitted and approved. Requests for approval of late PGR4s via Chair's action cannot be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the primary supervisor(s) to ensure that the PGR4 form has been submitted no later than the August GRSB meeting deadline.

How do I make an application for the Card Fee?

Following consultation and discussion of these terms and conditions, applications are to be submitted via a signed CARD FEE DECLARATION FORM to be emailed to GSO (graduatestudiesoffice@dcu.ie) by Friday 27th June 2025. GSO will NOT acknowledge receipt of the Card Fee Declaration until after Friday 27th June.

The €150 Card Fee should then be paid on or before Friday 25th July at which point Fees will record your status as a Card Fee applicant for 2025-26.

In **December 2025**, after the Card Fee deadline, the GSO will liaise with Fees and Registry directly to confirm those who have qualified and who have not.

How do I pay the Card Fee?

Where an applicant is to pay the Card Fee themselves, they should pay this directly to Fees by **Friday 25th July**. See the Fees pdf document on **How to Make a Pre Payment** at the following [link](#)

Alternatively, a subcost code to cover the €150 should be included on the Card Fee Declaration Form. Your supervisor/s must sign the Card Fee Declaration to approve this subcost.

What if I previously applied for a card fee?

Those students who have applied for the Card Fee in a previous academic year but have yet to submit their thesis for examination, are eligible to apply again but must submit a 2025-26 Card Fee Declaration and pay the €150 Card Fee by Friday 25th July.

What if I am eligible but miss the deadline for submission?

In the event that an applicant does not meet the Card Fee deadline, their fees will revert to the full fee appropriate to their full-time or part-time year of study. As a reminder, changes to registration status after the advertised deadline will not be considered. GSO will notify Fees of those applicants who have qualified for the Card Fee and those who have not after the Card Fee deadline has passed.

In line with current protocol, the Fees team will then write to those applicants who have not qualified (and who are responsible for paying their own outstanding fees), giving them a 7-day period in which to make contact. After this if no contact is made, the applicant's account will be blocked. Note that it may be possible for an individual payment plan for outstanding fees to be agreed with Fees (email fees@dcu.ie).

Extenuating circumstances may be considered in *very exceptional circumstances only* and on a case by case basis, but only if they apply directly to the period between submission of the card fee declaration (June 27th 2025) and the deadline for submission of the examination copy of the thesis (December 5th 2025), and can be supported by relevant documentation.

Extenuating circumstances occurring prior to submission of the card fee declaration cannot be taken into account. It is expected that any extenuating circumstances prior to card fee declaration have already been declared and dealt with by the supervisory panel, either through extensions to registration periods, deferrals, suspension of studies, or other local arrangements. Non-disclosure of extenuating circumstances prior to 27th June cannot be used to justify missing the card fee submission deadline.

If I'm eligible for and meet the Card Fee deadline, when will I graduate?

The majority of those who qualify for the Card Fee will graduate in Autumn 2026. Some may graduate in **Spring 2026** if they have submitted their thesis for examination by an **early** Registry submission deadline of **Thursday 9th October 2025 (date TBC)** and go on to submit their final hard-bound thesis by **Wednesday 7th January 2026 (date TBC)**. See Registry's [postgraduate research submission dates](#)

What if I am required to do a full resubmission of my thesis for examination post-viva?

Applicants who submit their thesis for examination by the Card Fee deadline but subsequently require a **full resubmission** following their *viva voce*, will have their Card Fee status relinquished at this point and will pay the full fee appropriate to their registration status for 2025-26. It will be possible for the applicant to submit a new application for the Card Fee in the next academic year. Students can apply for the Card Fee more than once but can only *qualify* once.

What is the €150 Examination Fee?

Research students who have submitted a thesis for examination **by 28th August 2025** are considered to be in the examination period and will instead qualify for an **Examination Fee** (Exam Fee). Exam Fee students will pay **€150 fees** for 2025-26. There is no paperwork associated with the Exam Fee. Exam Fee students must register for 2025-26 and so must engage as usual with the annual PGR2 progression process.

The Exam Fee should be paid directly to Fees by Thursday 28th August 2025 using the same pre-payment [link](#) as the Card Fee.

Summary TIMELINE for Card Fee qualification

Requirement	Deadline for submission	Details
Registry – PGR2	Wednesday 13th August 2025	PGR2 report on DCU Loop
Card Fee Declaration	Friday 27th June 2025	Card Fee Declaration to GSO (graduatestudiesoffice@dcu.ie)
Payment of Card Fee	Friday 25th July 2025	See Fees pdf doc on How to Make a Pre Payment at the following link
PGR4 (as necessary)	Thursday 31st July 2025	PGR4 to Registry (postgraduate.research@dcu.ie) N.B. No approved PGR4 form means thesis cannot be accepted. Supervisors need to ensure that the PGR4 form is submitted to the August GRSB at the latest.

PGR14 (as necessary)	Thursday 31 st July 2025	PGR14 to Registry (postgraduate.research@dcu.ie) N.B. No approved PGR14 form, when required, means thesis cannot be accepted. Supervisors need to ensure that the PGR14 form is submitted in a timely manner.
E-Thesis for examination	Friday 5th December 2025	Submit to Registry – contact postgraduate.research@dcu.ie in advance.
E-Thesis for examination: (early Registry deadline - possibility of Spring 2026 graduation)	Thursday 9 th October 2025 (date TBC)	Submit to Registry - contact postgraduate.research@dcu.ie in advance. Final approved copy to be submitted by Weds 7th January 2026 (date TBC).

Summary – Examination Fee

When applicable?	Application process?	Registration requirements?
Where the thesis for examination has been submitted to Registry (postgraduate.research@dcu.ie) before Thursday 28th August 2025 a student can avail of the €150 Examination Fee covering 2025-26.	There is no paperwork to be completed in respect of the Examination Fee. If you have submitted a thesis for examination before Thursday 28 th August please contact the Graduate Studies Office – email graduatestudiesoffice@dcu.ie	All research students must be fully registered up until such point as they submit their hard bound thesis. If the hard bound hasn't been submitted by Thursday 28th August 2025 the student must register for 2025-26