GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday 5 November 2009

9.00-11.15 a.m. in A204

Present: Professor Gary Murphy (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin, Dr Pat Brereton,
Professor John Costello[1], Ms Claudine Devereux, Ms Hannah Dyas,
Dr Gabriel Flynn, Ms Tanya Keogh, Dr Christine Loscher,
Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Ms Patricia Moore,
Dr Declan Raftery, Dr Mary Shine Thompson

Apologies: Dr Dermot Brabazon, Professor David Jacobson

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1.   Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of two additional submissions
under Item 4, nine additional submissions under Item 5, three additional
submissions under Item 6, four additional submissions under Item 7 and one
submission under Item 8.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2009

Confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   <u>Noted</u> that Professor Murphy was to hold a meeting with members of Registry and
ISS in the week beginning 9 November 2009 to discuss a range of issues including

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[1] Professor Costello participated by conference call.

online form completion, digital signatures, online support for students in remote locations, the possibility of using PAC for research applicants including international applicants, the possibility of having an automated system for identifying students due for transfer to, or confirmation on, the PhD register, and the implementation of procedures with respect to graduate training elements. (Items 3.2, 3.6 and 3.9)

3.2   Noted that the *IUQB National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education* were now available in hard copy as well as electronically. (Item 3.4)

3.3   Noted that a link had been created from the Graduate Research Office home page to the IUQB website. (Item 3.4)

3.4   Noted that training sessions for supervisors would take place in the course of 2009/10, starting in late 2009, and that a request for funding for such training formed a significant element of the quality improvement plan arising from the recent quality review of the postgraduate student experience. (Item 3.5)

3.5   Noted that a limited amount of funding would be made available by the Graduate Research Office towards the provision of tuition in academic writing skills for students whose native language was not English. Dr Blin mentioned that modules in SALIS might be helpful in this regard; she is to attend the next meeting scheduled between the Chair and Dr Claire Bohan, Director of Student Support and Development, with the aim of discussing the issue of language support. Noted that, even in the case of native speakers of English, academic writing skill level varied significantly, and consideration might need to be given to addressing this issue from a variety of perspectives, possibly including the provision of training in academic writing as part of graduate training more broadly, the involvement of the Learning Innovation Unit in developing writing workshops for researchers, and the creation of a distance-learning module in academic writing. The Chair undertook to discuss the issue with relevant parties. (Item 3.12)

3.6   Agreed that the possibility of classifying Master's degrees by research would be discussed at the single-issue meeting of the GSB to be held in December 2009 (see Item 12 below). Dr Shine Thompson undertook to source examples of practice in other institutions so as to inform the discussion. (Item 3.18)

3.7   Noted that the Chair had contacted relevant supervisors to express concern about the long interval, in the case of some students, between initial registration on the Master's register and request for transfer, or initial registration on the PhD-track register and request for confirmation. Agreed that this issue should be discussed by the Faculty Research Committees. (Items 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1)

3.8   <u>Agreed</u>, with respect to an intention expressed by a School to consider readmission of a student to the PhD track following initial failure to be confirmed on it (if appropriate improvement were demonstrated), that a regulation needed to be devised to cover such cases and included in the revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* (see Item 12 below). The Chair undertook to hold further discussions with the Associate Dean for Research in respect of this specific case. (Item 5.11)

3.9   <u>Noted</u>, in the case of a candidate who had notified an intention to submit for examination, that an alternative internal examiner had been identified and the nomination of the external examiner had been approved by Chair's action following clarification in relation to collaborative activities. (Item 6.2)

3.10   <u>Noted</u>, in the case of a nominated external examiner, that the nomination had been approved by Chair's action following resubmission of the form with full citations included for the nominee's publications. (Item 6.8)

3.11   <u>Noted</u> that a punctuation error in the title of a thesis had been corrected. (Item 6.10)

3.12   <u>Noted</u>, in the case of a nominated external examiner, that the nomination had been deemed approved following confirmation that the candidate was not a member of staff. (Item 6.17)

3.13   <u>Noted</u>, in the case of a nominated external examiner, that the nomination had been approved by Chair's action following resubmission of the form with full citations included for the nominee's publications. (Item 6.18)

3.14   <u>Noted</u>, in the case of a nominated external examiner, that the nominee was in fact not required as the candidate was not a staff member and did not require an additional external examiner. <u>Noted</u> also that an alternative internal examiner had been identified. <u>Noted</u> that it was desirable to avoid identifying as an internal examiner an individual whose line manager was the supervisor. (Item 6.19)

3.15   <u>Noted</u> that an outstanding signature on a change of supervisor request form (R-103) had been made available. (Item 7.2)

3.16   <u>Noted</u> that the PGR4 (notification of intention to submit for examination) form had been further revised to include a stipulation that full citations must be provided for the publications listed and failure to do this would mean that the form could not be considered. (Item 11.2)

3.17   Noted that a variety of opinions existed as to the locus of responsibility for uploading theses to DORAS: one perspective indicates that the responsibility should remain with the supervisor, for reasons of quality assurance; another indicates that the student should be entitled to undertake the uploading; the matter could also be considered to involve joint responsibility. Agreed that the Chair would discuss the matter both with the Schools in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences which had expressed views on it and with the Faculty Research Committee. (Item 12.4)

3.18   The Chair indicated that he had discussed with members of the Budget Committee the possibility of funding a scholarship scheme for research students. He requested members of the GSB to submit suggestions to him as to what an appropriate title for a scholarship fund might be. The importance of branding and publicising such a fund was noted.

SECTION B: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

4.   Applications for transfer to the PhD register

4.1   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/4.1, School of Electronic Engineering
       Approved.

4.2   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/4.2, School of Mathematical Sciences
       Approved.   Agreed none the less that Professor Murphy would request
       the School to explain the long interval between the initial registration on the
       Master's register and the transfer submission.

4.3   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/4.3, Dublin City University Business School
       Approved. Agreed none the less that Professor Murphy would request
       the School to explain the long interval between the initial registration on the
       Master's register and the transfer submission.

4.4   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/4.4, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing
       Engineering
       Approved. Agreed none the less that Professor Murphy would request the
       School to explain the long interval between the initial registration on the
       Master's register and the transfer submission.

4.5   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/4.5, School of Chemical Sciences
       Approved. Agreed none the less that Professor Murphy would request the
       School to explain the long interval between the initial registration on the
       Master's register and the transfer submission.

4.6   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/4.6, School of Applied Language and Intercultural
       Studies
       Approved.

5.   Applications for confirmation on the PhD register

5.1   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.1, School of Chemical Sciences
        Decision deferred pending the submission of an appropriately detailed report
        on the programme of research and the oral examination.

5.2   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.2, School of Chemical Scienes
        Approved.

5.3   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.3, School of Chemical Sciences
        Approved.

5.4   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.4, School of Communications
        Approved.

5.5   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.5, School of Computing
        Decision deferred pending the submission of detailed information on the
        procedures followed with respect to the oral examination.

5.6   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.6, School of Electronic Engineering
        Approved.

5.7   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.7, School of Law and Government
        Approved.

5.8   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.8, School of Law and Government
        Approved.

5.9   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.9, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing
        Engineering
        Decision deferred pending clarification of the reason no report on the oral
        examination was included on the form.

5.10   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.10, School of Law and Government
        Approved.

5.11   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.11, School of Electronic Engineering
        Approved.

5.12   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.12, School of Applied Language and
        Intercultural Studies
        Approved.

5.13   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.13, School of Applied Language and
        Intercultural Studies
        Approved.

5.14   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.14, School of Applied Language and
        Intercultural Studies
        Approved.

5.15   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.15, School of Applied Language and
        Intercultural Studies
        Approved.

5.16   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.16, School of Applied Language and
        Intercultural Studies
        Approved.

5.17 Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.17, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.

5.18 Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.18, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.

5.19 Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/5.19, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.

6. Appointment of external examiners

6.1 Professor Andrew Porter, University of Aberdeen
Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved.

6.2 Dr Niclas G Karlsson, University of Gothenburg/National University of Ireland, Galway
Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.2, MSc, School of Chemical Sciences
Decision deferred pending clarification as to whether or not the list of the nominee's publications is complete.

6.3 Professor Patrick R Unwin, University of Warwick
Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.3, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.

6.4 Dr Michael Lyons, Trinity College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.

6.5 Professor Jan Preisler, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.5, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Decision deferred pending submission of a more detailed list of the nominee's publications.

6.6 Dr Anthony Keane, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.6, MSc, School of Computing
Decision deferred pending submission of a more detailed list of the nominee's publications.

6.7 Dr Susan McDonnell, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.7, MSc, School of Computing
Decision deferred pending clarification as whether or not the candidate is deemed to be a member of staff as outlined in Section 8.2 of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*. Agreed that, if the candidate were not so deemed, the nomination could be approved electronically.

6.8   Professor Mark Saunders, University of Surrey
        Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.8, PhD, Dublin City University Business
        School
        Approved.

6.9   Professor Richard Elliott, University of Bath
        Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.9, PhD, Dublin City University Business
        School
        Approved.

6.10   Professor Fernando Pereira, Instituto Superior Técnico, Lisbon
        Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.10, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
        Approved.

6.11   Professor Jim McGovern, Dublin Institute of Technology
        Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.11, PhD, School of Mechanical and
        Manufacturing Engineering
        Decision deferred pending submission of an updated list of the
        nominee's publications.

.   6.12   Dr Billy Fitzgerald, Institute of Technology, Sligo
        Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.12, MSc, School of Biotechnology
        Decision deferred pending submission of an updated list of the nominee's
        publications.

6.13   Professor José A Calvo-Manzano Villalón, Universidad Politécnica de
        Madrid
        Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.13, PhD, School of Computing
        Approved.

6.14   Professor Peter Stratton, University of Leeds
        Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/6.14, PhD, School of Nursing
        Approved.

7.   Requests for changes to supervisory arrangements

7.1   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/7.1, School of Chemical Sciences
        Approved.

7.2   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/7.2, Dublin City University Business School
        Approved.

7.3   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/7.3, School of Applied Language and
        Intercultural Studies
        Approved.

7.4   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/7.4, School of Communications
        Approved.

7.5   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/7.5, School of Health and Human Performance
        Decision deferred pending the signing of the form by the Head of the School
        of Biotechnology (from which the student transferred to join the School of
        Health and Human Performance).

7.6   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/7.6, School of Health and Human Performance
        Decision deferred pending the signing of the form by the Head of the School
        of Biotechnology (from which the student transferred to join the School of
        Health and Human Performance).

8.   OTHER STUDENT ISSUES

8.1   Student ref. GSB/2009/A6/8.1, School of Nursing
        Special-case admission request
        Approved.

SECTION C: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

9.   Proposed graduate education modules

9.1   Postgraduate tutor/demonstrator course

Decision deferred pending clarification about the number of credits attaching to the
proposed module.

Noted that some regulatory issues pertaining to graduate research would need to
be discussed by the University Standards Committee as part of its ongoing
consideration of issues arising from the new Marks and Standards, in force
since 28 September 2009. These regulatory issues include: the fact that 2.5-
credit modules are envisaged as a normal part of the suite of graduate training
elements whereas Marks and Standards indicate that they should be discontinued,
and the fact that (as outlined in the proposals on the implementation of procedures
related to graduate training modules – see Item 10 below) a student who fails a
graduate training elements may repeat it in the next academic year whereas this is
precluded by Marks and Standards. Noted also that the issue of what level(s) might
be appropriate for graduate training modules would need further consideration.

Noted that, henceforth, a standard module descriptor would be made available
for completion by module proposers.

10.   Proposals on the implementation of procedures related to graduate education modules

10.1   The Chair outlined progress to date in relation to the implementation: a retrospective exercise had taken place to record results of modules developed in 2007/08 and 2008/09; all Faculties had held a Programme Board Examination Review Committee meeting in Summer 2009 to review the results of graduate training modules; by February/March 2010 a separate academic structure would exist for the modules for each Faculty. The resourcing implications of administering these modules were <u>noted</u> as being a cause of some concern.

10.2   The proposals were <u>approved</u> subject to the following:
- the reference to the GSB approving modules should be modified to indicate that approval is not merely formal but may be withheld if there is cause for concern (Section 3)
- the word 'final' should be removed before 'Faculty Awards Board for Research Degrees' (Section 3.2)
- the extent of flexibility with regard to resitting/repeating modules needs to be clarified (Sections 2, 5 and 6). (see Item 9.1 above)
- a process needs to be identified for enabling a supervisor to sign off on the suite of training elements to be undertaken by a student
- a typographical error needs to be corrected (Section 7).

11.   Proposal from the School of Education Studies on external examining of taught doctorates

11.1   The proposal was not approved. It was <u>agreed</u> that the current regulations with regard to external examiners for PhD students should be extended to taught doctoral students. In the event that this caused logistical difficulties for the School of Education Studies, the GSB should be made aware of this and requested to find ways of providing support. Consideration should be given to minimising the logistical difficulties with respect to future cohorts of students, for example by scheduling examinations at a time of year when examiners were most likely to be available and by using videoconferencing facilities. The Chair undertook to mention the decision taken by the GSB to the Deputy President with a view to seeking any further advice she might wish to provide about the matter.

11.2   Dr Shine Thompson reported that St Patrick's College had indicated satisfaction with the fact that the examination process for their first cohort of EdD students had been conducted with the same rigour as applies to PhD students. <u>Noted</u> that this was particularly important in view of the fact that taught doctorates were at a relatively early stage of development in the university and that uniformity of

practice was particularly desirable in view of the advent of structured PhDs, which contain elements of both taught doctorates and PhDs. Noted that the *viva voce* examination provided a common element across different types of doctoral programmes and that it was therefore all the more important to ensure that all students underwent a *viva*.

12.   **Redrafted *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis***

Agreed to defer consideration of this item to an additional, single-issue, meeting of the GSB to take place on 1, 8 or 15 December.

13.   Any other business

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 14 January 2010
9.00 a.m. in A204

Signed: _____   Date: _____
        Chair