

GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday 23 May 2013

9.00-11.30 a.m. in CG35

Present: Dr Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry, Professor Liam Barry, Ms Goretti Daughton, Ms Claudine Devereux, Dr Bernadette Flanagan, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Dr Ekaterina Kozina, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Ms Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Dr Enda McGlynn, Dr Anne Morrissey, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Dr Kevin Rafter, Dr Ana Terres

Apologies: Dr Christine Loscher

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one additional submission under Item 8 and one additional submission under Item 9.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 18 April 2013

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Noted that a number of ongoing issues are under consideration and that the GSB membership would be updated about these as appropriate. (Item 3.2)

3.2 Noted that, in two cases, a revised PGR3 form was awaited from a School. (Items 3.5 and 6.18)

- 3.3** Noted that information was awaited from a School in respect of a candidate who had requested permission to reside/carry out research abroad. (Item 3.6)
- 3.4** Noted that a number of revisions to postgraduate research forms were under consideration. Noted that a future meeting of the GSB would consider the issue of the relevance, as distinct from the recency, of the publications of individuals nominated as external examiner. (Item 3.7)
- 3.5** Noted that the revised Terms of Reference of the GSB would be submitted for the consideration of Academic Council at its meeting of 5 June 2013. (Item 3.10)
- 3.6** Noted that the revised GTE module descriptors for the Chemistry of Therapeutics framework would shortly be made available. (Item 3.11)
- 3.7** Noted that the Chair was giving consideration to the management of GTEs from the perspective of ensuring that each of them is the responsibility of a named external examiner. (Item 3.12)
- 3.8** Noted that a group charged with supporting adoption of the new national statement on research integrity and a range of related issues was continuing its work and that discussions were ongoing between the IUA and a provider of online research integrity and related tools. (Item 3.15)
- 3.9** With respect to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*, the following were noted:
- it is possible that the detailed list of changes to the *Regulations* will be published in final version and that this will be indicated as being consistent with what is done with respect to revisions to Marks and Standards (Item 5.2)
 - changes have been made to the draft revised *Regulations* to ensure consistency between these and the ancillary documentation (Item 5.5)
 - a presentation on the *Regulations* will be made to the Heads' and Deans' meeting of 19 September 2013 (Item 5.13)
 - the draft revised *Regulations* will be submitted for the consideration of the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 30 May 2013 (see also Item 6.1 below) and of Academic Council at its meeting of 24 June 2013 (Item 5.13)
 - a stipulation has been included in the *Regulations* that the independent chair of a *viva voce* examination must come from DCU or one of the linked colleges. (Item 7)
- 3.10** Noted that the *Roles and Responsibilities* guidance document would be made available to Heads of School and on line and, as appropriate, in the *DCU Guidebook for Research Students*. (Item 5.5)
- 3.11** Noted that a revised PGR3 form had been submitted by a School and had been deemed approved. (Item 6.11)

- 3.12** Noted that a School had provided a revised PGR3 form, that it had been deemed approved and that the Chair would communicate with the School. (Item 6.12)
- 3.13** Noted that it had been confirmed that the supervisor had been involved in the examination for confirmation on the PhD register and that the relevant PGR3 form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 6.21)
- 3.14** Noted that the Registry had conducted an exercise to determine the extent to which external examiners from distant locations are nominated. The Chair thanked Ms Devereux for this work. The exercise indicates that the numbers from distant locations are not unduly high at present. As a related issue, it was noted that, currently, 35%-40% of external examiners are from the Republic of Ireland and that it would be desirable to monitor trends in this regard in view of the expected changes in remuneration allowed to public servants from the Republic of Ireland for work such as that carried out by external examiners. (Item 7)
- 3.15** Noted that PGR4 forms had been signed by the supervisors and had therefore been deemed approved. (Items 7.1 and 7.12)
- 3.16** Noted that additional information relating to a PGR4 form had been made available by a School and that the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 7.2)
- 3.17** Noted that details of the reasons for nominating an external examiner were awaited. (Items 7.4 and 7.17)
- 3.18** Noted that it had been ascertained, in respect of a PGR4 form, that no issues arose with respect to the nominated independent chair of the *viva voce* examination. (Item 7.6)
- 3.19** Noted that additional details about a nominated external examiner had been made available. (Item 7.14)
- 3.20** Noted that it had been mentioned to a School that the examiners for a student who had failed the *viva voce* examination and had to repeat it should be the original examiners. (Item 7.16)
- 3.21** Noted that a School had decided to nominate an alternative external examiner for a student. (Item 7.23)
- 3.22** Noted that a School had decided to retain the approved external examiner for a student. (Item 7.26)
- 3.23** Noted that an issue with respect to the internal examiner had been raised with a School and that it has been ascertained that there was no problem with the nomination. (Item 7.30)

- 3.24 Noted that the regulations with respect to the appointment of an independent chair for the *viva voce* examination had been brought to the attention of a Head of School. (Item 7.30)
- 3.25 Noted that a School was considering a course of action with respect to the nomination of an external examiner. (Item 7.32)
- 3.26 Noted that an issue unrelated to approval had been raised with a Head of School. (Item 7.34)
- 3.27 Noted that an appropriately short abstract had been made available to accompany a PGR4 form. (Item 7.40)
- 3.28 Noted that a revised PGR4 form had been made available and had been deemed approved. (Item 7.43)
- 3.29 Noted that a School had confirmed that the decision not to appoint a second external examiner had been made advisedly. (Item 7.44)
- 3.30 Noted that evidence of recent relevant professional activity on the part of a nominated external examiner had been provided and that the nomination had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 7.57)
- 3.31 Noted that the outcomes of the recent EUA-CDE Global Strategic Forum on Doctoral Education had been made available to the GSB. (Item 11.2)
- 3.32 Noted that the report of the ARDE project had been made available to the GSB. (Item 11.3)
- 3.33 Noted that it was particularly important to include specific advice on a PGR3 form in cases of relatively weak performance at the transfer/confirmation examination stage. On the more general issue of the communication of the outcomes of this examination to students, it was suggested that it would be appropriate to make the PGR3 forms available to them as a matter of course. It was agreed that consideration would be given to the optimum means for organising this, in the context of the upcoming review of the PGR3 and postgraduate research forms generally.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Proposed Graduate Training Elements:

- 4.1 It was noted that a number of similar modules from different frameworks were coming to the attention of the GSB and that it would promote efficiency,

consistency and transparency of decision-making if a mechanism could be found to organise approval on as generic a basis as would be appropriate while also allowing for sufficient local discretion in terms of issues such as assessment. It was agreed that the Chair would discuss the issues with relevant colleagues and would then draft a procedure for the consideration of the GSB.

4.2 CA800: Computing and Engineering Seminar Series

It was noted that the code for this module should be CA600. It was agreed that, notwithstanding the fact that seminars will have different and changing research topics, some indicative content should be outlined, and that further detail would be required as to how the students would meet assessment requirements. It was agreed not to approve this module.

4.3 CA801: Advanced Scientific Communication Skills

It was noted that the code for this module should be CA601. The descriptor was approved subject to the provision of additional detail under 'Workload' and alignment of the information under 'Workload' and 'Coursework Breakdown'.

4.4 EE603: Advanced Literature Analysis

Approved subject to the provision of a more detailed breakdown of activities and associated hours under 'Workload'.

4.5 It was noted that auditing of GTEs by postdoctoral researchers and members of staff would be possible subject to the availability of places and the agreement of the Head of School.

5. Annual progress form project

5.1 Ms Barry summarised progress to date: mock-ups of the new system have been completed and signed off; a presentation to the Heads' and Deans' group will be made on 30 May 2013, with the final release provisionally scheduled for 31 May 2013; testing will take place in June 2013; the pilot phase, to be implemented in July 2013, will include approximately 300 students from a number of Schools (though the possibility exists that others might join the pilot, subject to the approval of the Head(s) of the relevant School(s)). The Chair thanked Ms Barry and the working group who had progressed the project to this point.

5.2 It was noted that it is recognised in the University that an overarching document management system would be desirable.

5.3 With respect to developments in terms of the Professional Development Plan, it was noted that the potential existed to use the functionality of the Business Information system.

6. Proposal on two issues relating to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*

6.1 In the discussion about the proposal on the issue related to resolving disputes, it was agreed that it would be important to draw attention in the first instance to the relevant University policies and that therefore the proposal should be restructured. It was also agreed to reduce the amount of detail with respect to the various postholders whom a Head of School might wish to consult in the event of a dispute so as to allow for appropriate flexibility (e.g. to avoid instances of conflict of interest).

6.2 The proposal on the issue relating to progress monitoring for professional doctorate students was approved.

6.3 It was agreed that the revised proposals would be circulated to the GSB and also incorporated into the revised version of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* to be submitted for the consideration of the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 30 May 2013 (see also Item 3.15 above).

7. Guidance for students and supervisors in terms of withdrawing, or early exit from research programmes

7.1 It was noted that full and accurate documentation, and timely procedures, are particularly important in the context of withdrawal/early exit and also that significant financial issues can arise in this context.

7.2 The Chair requested the members of the GSB to give consideration to the various issues with a view to fuller discussion at the meeting of 27 June 2013.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

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

8.1 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.1, School of Biotechnology
Approved.

8.2 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.2, School of Biotechnology
Approved.

- 8.3 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.3, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 8.4 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.4, School of Computing
Approved subject to confirmation that the recommendation is endorsed by both examiners. Agreed that the Chair would liaise with the School Research Convenor on this matter.
- 8.5 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.5, School of Computing
Approved.
- 8.6 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.6, School of Computing
Approved subject to confirmation that the recommendation is endorsed by both examiners and clarification as to what is intended by the reference to 'date of resubmission'. Agreed that the Chair would liaise with the School Research Convenor on these matters.
- 8.7 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.7, School of Law and Government Engineering
Approved.
- 8.8 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.8, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Decision deferred pending further information.
- 8.9 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.9, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.
- 8.10 Student ref. GSB/2013/A4/8.10, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.

Agreed that clarification would be sought about whether or not a member of a supervisory panel (other than the principal supervisor, who is not an examiner in any case) can act as internal examiner at the transfer/confirmation stage. Noted also that some local practice exists to the effect that an individual who acts as internal examiner at the transfer/confirmation stage does not act as such at the final examination stage, as does practice whereby the same internal examiner is used in both instances.

9. Appointment of external examiners

- 9.1 Dr Dara Fitzpatrick, University College Cork
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.1, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 9.2 Dr Kung-Kiu Lau, University of Manchester
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.2, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 9.3 Dr Alexander Hauptmann, Carnegie Mellon University
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.3, PhD, School of Computing
Approved subject to clarification of an issue relating to the composition of the panel and clarification as to the authorship of the explanatory note.

- 9.4 Professor Wessel Kraaij, Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.4, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 9.5 Dr Derek Bridge, University College Cork
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.5, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 9.6 Professor John Cartledge, Queen's University, Canada
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.6, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 9.7 Professor Zhili Sun, University of Surrey
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.7, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 9.8 Dr Ann Hopkins, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.8, PhD, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved subject to clarification of an issue relating to the composition of the panel. Agreed also that the Chair would raise with the School the appointment of independent chairs.
- 9.9 Dr Aidan Quinn, University College Cork
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.9, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.
- 9.10 Dr Charles Dillon, Queen's University Belfast
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.10, PhD, Roinn na Gaeilge, St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 9.11 Professor Stafford Hood, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,
Student ref. GSB2013/A4/9.11, EdD, School of Education Studies
Approved.

10. Other student issues

- 8.1 Student ref. GSB2013/A4/8.7, School of Law and Government
Request for extension of registration period
Approved.

11. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

**Thursday 27 June 2013
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____