

**GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD**

**MINUTES**

Thursday 1 November 2007

9.00-10.45 a.m. in A204

**Present:** Dr Gary Murphy (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin,  
Dr Patrick Brereton, Ms Claudine Devereux, Ms Louise McDermott  
(Secretary), Dr Declan Raftery, Dr Mary Shine Thompson

**Apologies:** Dr Pierre McDonagh, Dr Andrew McGrady,  
Professor Heather Ruskin

**SECTION A: Minutes and related issues**

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one new submission under Item 7, one new submission under Item 9, one new submission under Item 10 and two submissions under Item 12.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 6 September 2007**

Confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes**

**3.1** Follow-up actions from the last meeting were reported.

**3.2** The Chair noted that a representative of the postgraduate student research body would shortly join the Board. (Item 2.3)

- 3.3 The following wording for a thesis declaration was approved, and Section 7.4 of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* will be amended accordingly:

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of ..... (*insert title of degree for which registered*) is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my own work.

(Item 4)

- 3.4 The Chair undertook to remind relevant staff of the existence of the PhD confirmation procedure and the importance of using it properly. Noted, however, that the level of familiarity with it was increasing. (Item 6)

- 3.5 Noted that the Chair had agreed with the Finance Officer that a number of students who were completing their theses would be charged a nominal fee of €100 provided they submitted for examination by the end of the calendar year 2007. Students who do not complete by this time must pay fees as per the schedule of fees published by the Finance Office. Noted that this arrangement applied only to specific students who had requested additional time.

Agreed that the overall fee structure should be such as to facilitate students in need of a limited amount of additional time towards the completion of their research while discouraging undue prolongation of periods of research in a general sense. Agreed that it would be desirable to establish a general system with regard to late completions similar to that recently agreed in relation to specific students (and outlined above): where appropriate, a student could be allowed a grace period which would allow him/her to submit up to 1 December, subject to the agreement of the Chair/Director of Graduate Research, and could pay a nominal fee. Students not permitted this grace period would pay fees as per the schedule.

Noted that the current DCU system of charging fees to research students tended to foster misalignment between the date of initial registration and the date from which fees are charged. Agreed that it would be preferable to charge fees with effect from the month of initial registration.

Agreed that the Chair would, following further consultation with the Finance Officer, draft proposals on the basis of the discussion and circulate them to the Board for comment with a view to submitting them subsequently to Executive.

Noted that it would be desirable, across the higher education sector, for fees to be maintained at a reasonable level from the student point of view. Agreed that the Chair would place a proposal in relation to this matter on the agenda of the next meeting of the IUA 4th-level Support Network. Noted that funding support tended to be more readily available for Science/Engineering than for Humanities students.

(Item 9)

- 3.6 Noted that a course of action had been agreed in relation to a thesis which had been submitted for examination and subsequently withdrawn, that the student was currently engaged in further research and that submission would take place in due course. (Item 11.1)
- 3.7 Noted that, on a number of occasions, supervisors had sent theses to external examiners without routing them through the Registry. Agreed that this practice was very undesirable. Agreed that the Chair would communicate on this matter with Deans of Faculty, Associate Deans for Research and research convenors. Noted that communication on matters such as this would form part of a wider commitment to informing the University community of issues pertaining to graduate research, including regulatory issues. Agreed that consistency and transparency in adhering to regulations were essential. (Item 11)

## **SECTION B: Policy and strategy issues**

### **4. Proposed terms of reference for the Graduate Studies Board**

- 4.1 Noted that it had been agreed that the Graduate Studies Board would be a subcommittee of the University Standards Committee and that procedures for ensuring appropriate noting and approval of minutes were being established. Noted that the Chair would henceforth be a member of the USC.
- 4.2 Agreed that the Chair would raise with the Director of Quality Promotion the question of how best to articulate the outcomes of quality reviews with the work of the Board.
- 4.3 Agreed that it would be preferable to state that the Board would *normally* meet six times a year rather than that it would meet *a minimum of* six times a year.
- 4.4 Agreed that a proposal would be made to the next meeting about the inclusion of a reference to the linked colleges in the terms of reference.

**5. Joint supervision of research students between DCU and other institutions**

**5.1** Noted that the Chair intended to discuss with DCU Business School a number of specific queries arising from a joint supervision arrangement.

**5.2** Noted that the ‘cotutelle’ arrangement between St Patrick’s College and Université Paris Sorbonne – Paris IV was progressing satisfactorily.

**5.3** Agreed that the experience of such joint supervision arrangements as had been operating in the past or were currently operating would be very useful in informing any further regulations on the issue that might be formulated. Agreed that the issue of ensuring quality of supervision in the partner institution(s) was a particularly important one.

**6. Issues arising where a student and a supervisor or examiner have previously collaborated**

Agreed that the highest possible standards of transparency should be maintained in relation to this issue and that, where necessary in situations of potential conflict of interest, the relevant parties should be referred to the University’s overall policy on conflict of interest.

**SECTION C: Individual student issues****7. Applications for transfer to the PhD register**

7.1 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.1, Dublin City University Business School  
Decision deferred pending the appointment of a new internal examiner and the resitting of the transfer examination.

7.2 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.2, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering  
Approved.

7.3 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.3, School of Communications  
Approved.

7.4 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.4, School of Biotechnology  
Approved subject to the form being signed by the Head of School.

7.5 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.5, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.

7.6 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.6, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.

- 7.7 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.7, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.
- 7.8 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.8, School of Nursing  
Approved. The practice of seeking additional expertise in the form of an examiner currently engaged in clinical practice was noted with approval.
- 7.9 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.9, School of Nursing  
Approved.
- 7.10 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.10, School of Physical Sciences  
Approved.
- 7.11 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/7.11, School of Electronic Engineering  
Approved.

## **8. Applications for confirmation on the PhD register**

- 8.1 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/8.1, School of Electronic Engineering  
Approved.
- 8.2 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/8.2, School of Nursing  
Approved.

## **9. Appointment of external examiners**

- 9.1 Dr E Quigley, Institute of Technology, Tallaght  
Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/9.1, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering  
Approved.
- 9.2 Dr G Moane, University College Dublin  
Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/9.2, Education Department, St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 9.3 Professor O Ward, University of Waterloo  
Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/9.3, School of Biotechnology/NICB  
Decision deferred pending further discussion.
- 9.4 Dr C McCoy, Queen's University Belfast  
Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/9.4, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.
- 9.5 Dr T Veale, University College Dublin  
Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/9.5, School Computing  
Approved.

**10. Requests for changes to supervisory arrangements**

- 10.1 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/10.1, School of Communications  
Approved.
- 10.2 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/10.2, Dublin City University Business School  
Approved.
- 10.3 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/10.3, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Approved.
- 10.4 Student ref. GSB/2007/G2/10.4, School of Law and Government  
Approved.

**11. Requests for re-registration under ‘write-up’ status**

See paragraph 1 of Item 3.5 above.

**12. Any other business****12.1 Identification of sufficient numbers of external examiners**

Noted that, in certain subject areas, it was proving very difficult to source a sufficient number of external examiners, having due regard for regulations in relation to professional distance from the University (including the linked colleges for which increasing numbers of externs were needed), and particularly when taught doctoral programmes, with relatively high numbers of students submitting theses, were involved. Noted that the Programme Board for the Doctorate in Education in St Patrick’s College intended to formulate recommendations on this issue. Agreed that it would also be helpful to benchmark against practice in other universities. Agreed that this was a matter of considerable importance and that it would be discussed again shortly by the Board.

**12.2 Possibility of using the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) to administer applications from potential research students**

Noted that some other higher education institutions used PAC for research applications, and that using it might have advantages in terms of decreased paperwork and shortened timeframes but further discussion would be required. Noted that the next meeting of the PAC Steering Group would take place on 15 January 2008, and agreed that this issue would be placed on the agenda for this meeting.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 10 January 2008  
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_