

GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday 6 November 2008

9.00-11.00 a.m. in A204

Present: Professor Gary Murphy (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin, Dr Pat Brereton, Dr Tony Cafolla, Ms Jennifer Dowling, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Professor David Jacobson, Dr Christine Loscher, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Declan Raftery, Dr Mary Shine Thompson

Apologies: Ms Tanya Keogh, Ms Noeleen Peel

The Chair welcomed Dr Gabriel Flynn, Head of the School of Theology in Mater Dei Institute of Education, to his first meeting of the Graduate Studies Board.

SECTION A: Minutes and related issues

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of ten additional submissions under Item 6, one submission under Item 7, two submissions under Item 8 and two submissions under Item 10.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 4 September 2008

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** Noted that the Management Committee in St Patrick's College would discuss the possibility of adopting a system similar to *Submission of Theses between September and December*. Noted that a significant number of students in DCU had applied to submit under the system and that, while all applications received by the deadline of 1 December 2008 would be given consideration, no late applications would be accepted. (Item 3.2)
- 3.3** Noted that the research student exit survey would be available as soon as technical issues had been resolved and that the IUQB guidelines on *Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities* (to be updated shortly – see Item 9 below) recommended the practice of requesting students to complete such surveys. (Item 3.3)
- 3.4** Noted that the working group to review *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* was continuing to meet and that the outcome of its deliberations would be made available to the GSB in due course. Noted also that it would be important that the updated guidelines referred to in Item 3.3 above were reflected in the revised regulations. (Item 3.4)
- 3.5** Noted that discussions were continuing with a view to finalising the procedures for ensuring the accurate recording of graduate training modules and other relevant activities. (Item 3.5)
- 3.6** Noted that an alternative external examiner for a student had been nominated, and approved by means of Chair's action. (Item 3.7)
- 3.7** Noted that the HEA quality review visit had taken place and that feedback was expected. This feedback will be in the form of a general report and will not incorporate comments on individual institutions. (Item 3.13)
- 3.8** Noted that no information was yet to hand about a call for submissions under PRTL Cycle 5. (Item 3.14)
- 3.9** Noted that the *Irish Universities' PhD Graduates' Skills* statement was now available and that the Chair had drawn the attention of the university community to it in a recent e-mail message. Noted that the skills were conceptualised as being of two kinds, 'soft' skills and discipline-specific skills, that training in the acquisition of skills formed part of the graduate training programme currently under implementation and that it should not be expected that all students would acquire, or would need, all of the skills. (Item 3.15)
- 3.10** Noted that the Joint IUQB Conference: 'Opportunities and Challenges in Developing 4th Level Education' had taken place in October. While it was in

- progress, the Government had announced significant changes to the remit of the IUQB; these changes are not expected to be implemented until 2010 (and the updating of the guidelines referred to in Item 3.3 above is to go ahead). Noted none the less that it would be important for the GSB to address the implications of the changes for graduate research in the university. (Item 3.15.)
- 3.11** Noted that a query about an application for confirmation on the PhD register had been satisfactorily addressed and that the confirmation had been approved. (Item 5.3)
- 3.12** Noted that a query about a nominated external examiner had been satisfactorily addressed and that the nominee had been approved. (Item 6.13)
- 3.13** Noted that the Chair intended to discuss with a Head of School an issue that had arisen about the compatibility between a student's research and the expertise available in the School. Agreed that the issue needed both to be resolved at the level of the individual student and addressed at a more general level. Agreed that the general issue would form part of the discussions of the working group referred to in Item 3.4 above and that these discussions should take account of the desirability of facilitating co-supervision where appropriate, particularly since interdisciplinary research is encouraged. (Item 6.18)
- 3.14** Noted that a query about a nominated external examiner had been satisfactorily addressed and that the nominee had been approved. (Item 6.20)
- 3.15** The draft pro-forma *curriculum vitae* for external examiner nominees was approved subject to the inclusion of a prompt to indicate the nominee's webpage. Agreed however to incorporate into it, if appropriate, elements of a standard Europass CV (i.e. a standard European CV) available on line which Professor Jacobson kindly undertook to make available after the meeting. (Item 6)
- 3.16** Noted that a student about to register for a Master's degree by research in Dublin City University Business School would, on completion of the programme, be awarded the standard title of 'Master of Business Studies' and that this information had been conveyed to the student. (Item 8.2)
- 3.17** Noted that a procedure for allowing for transfer from a professional doctoral programme to the Master's register was being devised by the Registry and that details would be made available to the 8 January 2008 meeting of the GSB. (Item 8.2)
- 3.18** Noted that a number of issues relating to the Lero Graduate Programme had been discussed with the programme leader and resolved. Agreed that all programmes of

- this kind should be brought to the attention of, and agreed with, the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Research prior to being agreed with partners in other institutions, whether the students in question worked in Research Centres or in Schools. Noted that every research student was required to register with a School even where the research was carried out in a Centre. (Item 10)
- 3.19** Noted that the ‘Cotutelle’ agreement with James Cook University, Australia, had now been made. Noted that it would be desirable to streamline, as far as possible, the administration associated with such agreements. Noted, more generally, that it would be desirable to give consideration to arrangements for facilitating joint supervision between institutions (an issue which is being addressed by the working group referred to in Item 3.4 above). (Item 9)
- 3.20** Noted that the workshop on supervisory skills which had taken place on 16 September 2008 had been very successful and that, having been oversubscribed, it would be repeated. The Human Resources Department is planning to incorporate an extended version of the workshop into the Training and Development schedule. (Item 11.1)
- 3.21** Noted that the first ISSP (Irish Social Sciences Platform) Conference: ‘After the Celtic Tiger’ had been hosted very successfully by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences on 11 and 12 September 2008 and that the link with the ISSP was likely to be a very helpful one. (Item 11.2)

SECTION B: Individual student issues

4. Applications for transfer to the PhD register

- 4.1 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/4.1, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.2 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/4.2, School of Communications
Approved.
- 4.3 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/4.3, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.

5. Applications for confirmation on the PhD register

- 5.1 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.1, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 5.2 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.2, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.

- 5.3 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.3, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 5.4 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.4, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 5.5 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.5, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.
- 5.6 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.6, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.
- 5.7 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.7, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.
- 5.8 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.8, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.
- 5.9 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.9, School of Nursing
Approved.
- 5.10 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.10, School of Nursing
Approved.
- 5.11 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.11, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved. Noted, however, that the form had been filled out incorrectly and that the relevant staff member would be requested to correct this.
- 5.12 Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/5.12, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.

Noted that the similarity between forms PGR3 (transfer to the PhD register) and PGR11 (confirmation on the PhD register) tended to cause confusion for those completing them, that this had been discussed by the working group referred to in Item 3.4 above and that the problem would be addressed. Agreed that, where the focus of research changed significantly over time, leading to a necessary change in thesis title, the supervisor should be directed to highlight this on the PGR2 (annual progress report) form. This issue will also be addressed by the working group.

The importance of ensuring that the number of students supervised by one individual did not exceed regulations was noted. Agreed that the Chair would send a reminder about this to all interested parties at the beginning of each academic year.

6. Appointment of external examiners

- 6.1 Professor Pat Guiry, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.1, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 6.2 Dr Dónal Leech, National University of Ireland, Galway
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.2, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 6.3 Professor Anita Maguire, University College Cork
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.3, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 6.4 Professor Mary Jane Meegan, Trinity College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 6.5 Professor John McGarvey, Queen's University Belfast
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.5, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 6.6 Professor Linda Doyle, Trinity College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.6, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 6.7 Dr Koen van Dongen, Delft University of Technology
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.7, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Decision deferred pending discussion between the Chair and the supervisor.
- 6.8 Professor Emmanuel van Lil, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.8, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 6.9 Professor Luc Knockaert, Ghent University
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.9, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 6.10 Dr Anthony Robinson, Trinity College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.10, PhD, School of Mechanical and
Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.
- 6.11 Professor Jesús Bescós, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.11, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 6.12 Dr Petros Iosifidis, City University London
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.12, PhD, School of Communications
Approved.
- 6.13 Dr Douwe van Sinderen, University College Cork
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.13, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved.

- 6.14 Dr Frank Marken, University of Bath
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.14, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 6.15 Dr Gráinne Ní Dhomhnaill, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.15,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.16 Dr Gráinne Ní Dhomhnaill, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.16,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.17 Dr Martin Gleeson, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.17,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.18 Professor Kathleen Lynch, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.18,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.19 Dr Dymna Devine, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.19,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.20 Professor Clive Dimmock, University of Leicester
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.20,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.21 Professor Brahm Norwich, University of Exeter
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.21,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.22 Dr Rory McConkey, University of Ulster
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.22,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.23 Dr Claire Hayes, formerly National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/6.23,
Doctorate in Education (EdD), St Patrick's College
Approved.

The Chair congratulated Dr Shine Thompson and her colleagues in St Patrick's College on the fact that the first group of EdD students were about to present for examination (the nominated external examiners for nine of these students are listed

at Items 6.15-6.23 inclusive above, and the names of the nominated external examiners for the remaining students will be submitted for approval to the 8 January 2008 meeting of the GSB). Noted that the logistical challenges involved in identifying sufficient suitable nominees and organising the examinations were significant.

7. Requests for changes to supervisory arrangements

- 7.1** Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/7.1, Dublin City University Business School
Approved.

8. Other student issues

8.1 Special-case request for award of PhD

Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/8.1, School of Physical Sciences
Decision deferred pending discussion between the Chair and the supervisor with a view to (a) obtaining additional information about the student's contribution to publications and to other relevant activities and (b) establishing the feasibility of submission in a satisfactory format. Agreed that any revised proposal would require submission for approval to the University Standards Committee as well as to the GSB.

8.2 Request to conduct *viva voce* examination by videoconferencing (in circumstances where it is the student and not an examiner who is away)

Student ref. GSB/2008/A6/8.2, School of Communications
Approved.

SECTION C: Policy and strategy issues

9. IUQB site visit

Noted that the site visit by the IUQB to seek the views of stakeholders with a view to updating the guidelines on *Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities* (see Item 3.3 above) would take place on 20 November 2008 and that the Chair would be seeking participation in focus groups from students, supervisors and administrative staff.

10. Any other business

10.1 Draft agreement for research co-operation between DCU and the European School of Business at Reutlingen University

Approved.

10.2 Possibility of setting up a national database of all PhD proposals

Agreed that the Chair would raise this issue with the IUQB in the course of the visit to DCU due to take place in the context of the updating of the guidelines on *Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities* referred to in Items 3.4 and 9 above.

Date of next meeting:

**Thursday 8 January 2009
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____