

GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD**MINUTES**

Thursday 18 October 2012

9.00 -11.00 a.m. in A204

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

The Chair welcomed Dr Kevin Rafter, newly-appointed Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, to his first meeting of the Graduate Studies Board, and also welcomed Ms Devereux back to the GSB following her leave.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one additional submission under Item 9 and one additional submission under Item 11.1 and the substitution of ‘School of Electronic Engineering’ for ‘School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering’ in Item 10.12.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2012

The minutes were confirmed subject to the rewording of Item 3.10 so that it reads:

Noted that the proposals on the approval mechanisms for structured research awards had been approved by the Education Committee at its meeting of 5 September 2012 and that approval would be sought from Academic Council at its meeting of 10 October 2012.

They were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted that options in respect of ensuring appropriate entry standards of English language on the part of native speakers of other languages are under discussion in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing. (Item 3.2)
- 3.2** Noted that, at its meeting of 10 October 2012, Academic Council had approved the recommendation that the Doctorate of Music in Performance programme taught in the Royal Irish Academy of Music be re-accredited in 2012/13. (Item 3.4)
- 3.3** Noted that a possible representative on the PAC User Group from Dublin City University Business School/Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences had been identified. (Item 3.6)
- 3.4** Noted that an issue in respect of internal examiners had been mentioned to Heads of School. (Item 3.8)
- 3.5** Noted that the proposals on the approval mechanisms for structured research awards had been approved Academic Council at its meeting of 10 October 2012. (Item 3.10)
- 3.6** Noted, in respect of the review of examination arrangements since the inception of the GSB in September 2007 to establish the extent to which appointments of external examiners from the same departments in other institutions might have been made, that the data had been made available to Heads of School, via the Faculties, on a per-School basis. The review will continue to be undertaken each year, on a rolling basis covering the previous five years. (Item 3.12).
- 3.7** Noted that the proposed Recognition of Prior Learning policy for research students was being discussed in Faculties and that the outcome would be considered by the GSB at its meeting of 29 November 2012. (Item 3.13)
- 3.8** Noted that the proposals on PhD by publication were being discussed in Faculties and that the outcome would be considered by the GSB at its meeting of 29 November 2012. (See also Item 9 below.) (Items 3.14)
- 3.9** Noted that the proposals on joint research supervision and awards were being discussed in Faculties with a view to further discussion at the meeting of the Education Committee of 7 November 2012. (Item 3.15)

- 3.10** Noted that the GSB terms of reference had been amended to include the agreed reference to substitution of representation and that they would be submitted for the approval of Academic Council as soon as possible. (Item 3.16)
- 3.11** With respect to the documentation on qualifications, roles and responsibilities of supervisors and examiners, the Chair noted that she had had a fruitful discussion about it with the incoming Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar), Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, and had also got some feedback from across the University, particularly from the Faculty of Science and Health. Professor Barry undertook to submit to her additional feedback from the Faculty of Engineering and Computing. It was agreed that the Chair would integrate all the feedback into a revised document and would send this to the Associate Deans for Research with a view to further consideration in the Faculties as well as to the other GSB members with a view to discussion with colleagues as appropriate. The 18 April 2012 meeting of the GSB will consider specific changes to the *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* that may arise from the implications of the documentation, once the final version has been approved. It was noted that there were also some operational queries, and that these would be addressed once all the matters of principle had been agreed. (See also Item 9 below.) (Item 5)
- 3.12** Noted that dialogue had taken place with a School in respect of the completion of PGR3 forms, and that procedures had been agreed for future reference. (Item 6)
- 3.13** Noted that two PGR3 forms had been signed by the supervisors. (Items 6.1 and 6.2)
- 3.14** With respect to the proposed framework for transfer from Professional Doctorate to PhD, the Chair noted that she was continuing discussions with all relevant Programme Chairs with a view to encouraging the development of a common framework across all Professional Doctoral programmes which could be submitted for the consideration of the GSB. The specific request for transfer which had been submitted on behalf of a student was approved on the basis that the focus of the student's research had changed since inception and the approach that now seemed most appropriate was consistent with that used for a traditional PhD. However, concerns were noted about the basis on which the case for transfer had been made, and it was noted that the criteria adduced were not in line with international practice and tended implicitly to devalue the Professional Doctorate. It was agreed that the Chair would discuss the matter with the Programme Chair. (Items 6.12 and 10.22)
- 3.15** Noted that a PGR3 form had been approved by Chair's action on 25 September 2012. (Item 6.9)

- 3.16** Noted that it had been mentioned to a supervisor and an internal examiner that the information on a PGR3 form was unhelpfully brief. (Item 6.11)
- 3.17** Noted that the ‘recommendations’ box on a PGR3 form had been ticked. (Item 6.31)
- 3.18** Noted that the name of an external examiner had been added to a PGR3 form. (Item 6.33)
- 3.19** Noted that it had been mentioned to a supervisor that the information on a PGR3 form was unhelpfully brief. (Item 6.35)
- 3.20** Noted, in respect of a PGR3 form, that the wording of Section 1(a) had been changed as requested. (Item 6.37)
- 3.21** Noted that a School had discussed its practice of involving an individual external to the University in the transfer/confirmation process and had decided to no longer to do so as a matter of routine. (Item 6.42)
- 3.22** Noted that confirmation had been obtained from a School about the format of a thesis. (Item 6.48)
- 3.23** Noted, in respect of a PGR4 form, that an alternative internal examiner had been identified, the word count had been clarified, the appropriate signatures had been made available and the form had been approved by Chair’s action on 5 October 2012. (Item 7.7)
- 3.24** Noted that work was ongoing to identify alternative external examiners for two students. (Items 7.13 and 7.19)
- 3.25** Noted that a justification for early submission of a thesis was being sought. (Item 7.31)
- 3.26** Noted, in respect of a PGR4 form, that it had been confirmed that the proposed word length of the thesis was appropriate. (Item 7.34)
- 3.27** Noted, in respect of a PGR4 form, that the details of the years associated with the external examiner’s publications had been provided. (Item 7.51)
- 3.28** Noted that the outcome of the GSB’s consideration of a PGR4 form had been conveyed to the relevant staff members following the completion of the registration process for the student. (Item 7.52)

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Proposed Graduate Training Elements

No items.

5. Graduate researcher education: discussion paper

5.1 In introducing the paper, the Chair alluded to the report on the implementation of Graduate Training Elements which had been submitted to the 3 November 2011 meeting of the GSB and had reflected the progress that had been achieved by that time. She expressed appreciation, on behalf of the GSB, to the members of Registry, Faculty Administration and the Graduate Studies Office who had worked during 2011/12 to address the operational issues associated with the availability and administration of GTEs. She noted, in this connection, that further discussion with relevant staff would be necessary, in due course, about Section 5 of the discussion paper, which deals with administration. With respect to the paper, she noted that its purpose was to allow all stakeholders to take a wide perspective on GTEs and the issues associated with them with a view to formulating recommendations for graduate training into the future. She expressed appreciation to Dr Dixon for her work in preparing the detailed appendices to the paper.

5.2 In the ensuing discussion, the following were agreed:

- the sentence in Section 3 that reads ‘Time spent in laboratories in other institutions or equivalent relevant experience can be offset against these credit requirements’ will be replaced by ‘Time spend in laboratories in other institutions or equivalent relevant experience can be accredited’
- in Section 6 on provision, a reference to postdoctoral researchers will be included to make it clear that the potential exists for them to avail of GTEs (possibly on an auditing basis)
- references to the Recognition of Prior Learning (captured in professional portfolios) and its impact on GTE requirements, and to the potentially different provision of GTEs for part-time and full-time students, will be included in the paper
- a comment will be incorporated into the paper on the issue of uptake of GTEs (to date, the numbers of students being considered at Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees who have taken GTEs is low)
- there will be a reference to the desirability of co-ordinating relevant dates (e.g. the deadline for PGR2 submission and the dates of Graduate Research Awards Boards).

- 5.3** In terms of requirements elsewhere for student to undertake GTEs, it was noted that practice in Ireland varies though two other universities currently specify that research students must obtain a minimum of 30 credits' worth of GTEs. The first students on research programmes with this requirement are beginning to graduate at this point, and it may be possible for the universities in question to look back on the experience and identify strengths and weaknesses of the approach.
- 5.4** In terms of European practice, it was noted that there tends to be less focus on accreditation of GTEs than is the case in Ireland or the UK. Conversely, greater attention tends to be paid in continental Europe to recruitment processes (on the basis that research students should be conceptualised as early-stage research staff members). The increasing European Community focus on research that is intersectoral, international and interdisciplinary may involve significant costs; it will be important to establish whether such concepts are to be conceived of as minimum thresholds to be reached by all students or ideals to be achieved over time, and also to ensure continuing parity of esteem across the various kinds of doctoral programmes.
- 5.5** It was noted that future decisions on GTE provision would be driven very significantly by HEA decisions on funding models and that future such models may tend to have the effect of encouraging research in areas relatively amenable to structured doctoral programmes, thereby potentially disadvantaging the Humanities. The need to represent appropriately, at sectoral level, the perspective and priorities of those involved in research in the Humanities was noted also, as was the importance of ensuring that the quality framework for PhD education, proposed for the sector, is appropriate in its context. There was some discussion of the concept of a structured doctoral programme and what might be defined as necessarily having to be included in it. It was noted too that costs attach to the provision of GTEs for research students even where the modules exist already in the context of taught programmes. Work carried out to date by means of the Full Economic Costing exercise indicates that funding for PhD students does not cover costs in full. In this connection, the Chair mentioned that she was in discussion with the Director of Finance with a view to establishing details of such costs. She noted too the need to ensure that GTEs are affordable while remaining financially worth while for the providers.
- 5.6** The following were also noted in discussion:
- while a small number of GTEs currently do not belong to any Faculty, discussions are ongoing (on the basis of guidance from the Education Committee) with a view to ensuring that Faculties take responsibility for them as appropriate
 - exit interview data tends to indicate that graduating students appreciated the opportunity to undertake GTEs, or would have wished to do so; opportunities

for allowing them to do so may include offering GTEs on an intensive rather than a semester basis and providing an accredited module to cover professional activities as distinct from attendance at lectures and other academic exercises

- to the extent possible, administration systems for GTEs are now understood across the sector, though full integration of such systems is not feasible; in any event, it may be preferable to await indications of the extent to which the provision of GTEs will remain an option in the long term before making further changes to systems.

5.7 It was agreed that the Chair would discuss the issues with Heads of School and relevant administrative staff. The outcome of these discussions will determine the next steps to be taken.

6. Information systems for graduate research

6.1 The Chair noted that work was in progress to ensure the online availability of the PGR2 (annual progress report) form, and thanked Ms Barry and the other staff members involved in this project. The platform being used for this is Moodle; in time, there may be scope for using Moodle in conjunction with Business Intelligence to facilitate online access to information for stakeholders involved with graduate research.

6.2 The Chair noted that the document on information systems would, when updated following input from Faculties and other relevant areas of the University, form the basis of a user specification to be submitted to Information Systems and Services. Discussion would then need to take place to determine the extent to which the specification could be implemented, in the light of available resources. She undertook to make a slightly revised version of the document (including a reference to the PAC application stage) available to the GSB members and requested them to discuss it with their colleagues, and submit comments and suggestions to her as soon as possible.

7. Summary of GSB actions 2011/12, and update on some ongoing/completed issues

Noted. The Chair, on behalf of the GSB, thanked all involved in the various activities and initiatives that were outlined in the document.

8. Update on graduate research orientation and exit surveys 2011/12

- 8.1** This was noted. The Chair noted that the intention was to continue to conduct the exit surveys as research students graduated, with the 2011/12 outcomes being used as a baseline with which future outcomes would be compared (and, if urgent items emerged, these would be dealt with in a short timeframe).
- 8.2** With respect to the orientation sessions held on 21 September 2012, the Chair, on behalf of the GSB, thanked all involved, including Dr Dixon for the overall organisation and presentation on training, Dr Terres for presenting an overview of the broader research environment and Ms Moore for providing the student perspective. She noted that it had been helpful for the students to get a sense of how their work related to the broader context. She noted too that a revised format for orientation was being discussed and that this was likely to involve, firstly, presentations and, later, follow-up workshops which would give students an opportunity to take part in activities that would reinforce their learning.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

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

- 9.1 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.1, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 9.2 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.2, Dublin City University Business School
Approved.
- 9.3 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.3, Dublin City University Business School
Approved.
- 9.4 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.4, Dublin City University Business School
Approved.
- 9.5 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.5, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 9.6 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.6, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved subject to clarification with respect to the role of the supervisor who is no longer a staff member of the University and to the inclusion of this person's signature if he is still involved in the supervision process.
- 9.7 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.7, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved subject to clarification with respect to the role of the supervisor who is no longer a staff member of the University and to the inclusion of this person's signature if he is still involved in the supervision process.
- 9.8 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.8, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved. Agreed, however, that the Chair would, as soon as possible, discuss with the Head of School an issue relating to the number of supervisors involved.

- 9.9 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.9, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved. Agreed, however, that Dr McGlynn would discuss with the School queries relating to the time the student had spent working abroad.
- 9.10 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.10, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 9.11 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.11, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 9.12 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.12, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 9.13 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.13, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 9.14 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.14, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 9.15 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.15, School of Law and Government
Approved.
- 9.16 Student ref. GSB/2012/A6/9.16, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved subject to clarification as to the title of the proposed award and the retraction of wording in Section 2 which does not reflect the overall recommendation.

It was noted that there would be an opportunity at the next GSB meeting, that of 29 November 2012, to discuss issues relating to PhD by publication and any possible impact they might have on the conduct of the transfer/confirmation examination.

It was noted that circumstances can arise which lead to a student's having an unusually high number of supervisors but that this issue would be addressed by the establishment of supervisory panels. It was suggested that there be a relevant reference in the part of the guidance documentation that deals with the role of supervisors. (See Item 3.11 above.)

7. Appointment of external examiners

- 10.1 Dr Lesa Ní Mhunghaile, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
Professor Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, Trinity College Dublin
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.1, PhD, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.
- 10.2 Dr Laurence Cox, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.2, PhD, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.

- 10.3 Dr Kevin Harvey, University of Nottingham¹
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.3, MA, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.
- 10.4 Professor Viktor Kožich, Charles University, Prague¹
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.4, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 10.5 Dr Glenn Kennedy, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Northern Ireland
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.5, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved subject to clarification as to which type of thesis format is proposed.
- 10.6 Dr Claire Gardiner, Trinity College Dublin
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.6, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 10.7 Dr Tim Brady, University of Brighton
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.7, PhD, Dublin City University Business School
Approved.
- 10.8 Professor Rodney McAdam, University of Ulster
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.8, PhD, Dublin City University Business School
Approved.
- 10.9 Professor Gregory O'Hare, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.9, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 10.10 Dr Michael O'Mahony, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.10, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 10.11 Professor Djoerd Hiemstra, University of Twente
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.11, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 10.12 Dr Antoni Mesquida, Universitat de les Illes Balears, Majorca
Student ref. GSB2012/A5/10.12, MEng, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved subject to clarification as to the title of the proposed award.

¹ The nomination as external examiner was approved at the meeting of 10 September 2012; however, a change of internal examiner was subsequently proposed and required approval.

- 10.13 Dr Brigid Mullany, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.13, PhD, School of Mechanical and
Manufacturing Engineering
Not approved, as the PGR3 (request for transfer to/confirmation on the PhD
register) is awaited.
- 10.14 Dr Adrian Boyd, University of Ulster
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/10.14, PhD, School of Mechanical and
Manufacturing Engineering
Approved
- 10.15 Dr Denis Dowling, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB2012/A6/0.15, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.

It was noted that cases in which students had a mix of part- and full-time registrations appeared to be more common than formerly.

It was noted that issues were likely to arise as to the appropriateness of nominating staff members from the 3U partner organisations as external (or, conversely, as internal) examiners and that it was likely that these would be discussed by the 3U Partnership steering group. The Chair invited the members of the GSB to submit views on the issue to her.

It was noted that some problems persisted with respect to the ease of location of the correct PGR forms on line but that it was likely these would be resolved with the advent of the restructured University website in early 2013.

It was noted that, because the CV section of the PGR4 form elicits information on most relevant, rather than most recent, publications, some forms tended to list only relatively old publications. It was agreed that the appropriateness of the wording of the question about publications would be reviewed in due course.

11. Other student issues

11.1 Requests to extend registration period

- 11.1.1 Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.1, Dublin City University Business School
Approved for one further year. Agreed that all relevant parties would be made aware of the regulations with respect to deferral.
- 11.1.2 Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.2, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved for a maximum of one further year. Agreed that a new PGR4 (notification of intention to submit for examination) form would be required.

- 11.1.3 Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.3, School of Health and Human Performance
Approved for one further year. Noted that it would be important for the research to be concluded as soon as possible.
- 11.1.4 The following requests were noted as having been approved by Chair's action:
- Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.1, School of Biotechnology
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.2, School of Chemical Sciences
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.3, School of Chemical Sciences
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.4, School of Computing
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.5, School of Computing
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.6, Dublin City University Business School
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.7, School of Health and Human Performance
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.8, School of Law and Government
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.9, School of Law and Government
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.10, School of Physical Sciences
 - Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.1.4.11, School of Physical Sciences.

It was agreed that the procedures for requesting extensions to registration periods would be reviewed once the current relatively high number of students who had been registered for a long period had passed through the system and graduated.

11.2 Request for special-case admission

Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.2, School of Physical Sciences
Approved for admission to the Master's register. Noted that, once available, the policy on Recognition of Prior Learning for research students would be likely to be of assistance in dealing with requests such as this one.

11.3 Request for transfer from another institution

Student ref. GSB2012/A6/11.3, School of Health and Human Performance
Approved. Noted (in a general sense rather than with particular reference to this request) that responses to requests for transfer need to take account of the candidate's standing in the institution from which transfer is sought.

12. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

**Thursday 29 November 2012
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____