

GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday 24 January 2013

9.00-11.50 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 Anne Morrissey, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Dr Ana Terres

Apologies: Ms Ann McCartney, Dr Kevin Rafter

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of two additional submissions under Item 6 and three submissions under Item 8.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 29 November 2012

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted that the Education Committee and the Senior Management Group had expressed support for the proposals on joint research supervision and awards; SMG had requested that the relevant document be restructured, and would consider it in its revised form soon. (Item 3.2)

- 3.2** Noted that a framework for transfer from Professional Doctorate to PhD was under development in Dublin City University Business School, that the School of Education Studies had agreed that they would not require such a framework and that the School of Nursing and Human Sciences had agreed that they would develop such a framework should it prove necessary. (Item 3.4)
- 3.3** Noted that the Chair had made a presentation on graduate researcher education to the 29 November 2012 meeting of the Heads' and Deans' group. (Item 3.6)
- 3.4** Noted that discussions about the cost of doctoral education were ongoing. (Items 3.6 and 3.7)
- 3.5** Noted that feedback from discussions with stakeholders about the management of Graduate Training Elements would be made available to the GSB as soon as possible. (Item 3.8)
- 3.6** Noted that discussions about information systems for research students were ongoing. (Item 3.9).
- 3.7** Noted that discussions would take place as soon as possible with a Head of School in respect of the number of supervisors noted on a PGR3 form. (Item 3.11)
- 3.8** Noted that discussions would take place with Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar), about the implications for external examiner nominations and other relevant aspects of GSB work of the developments with respect to the 3U Partnership. (Item 3.13)
- 3.9** Noted that a PGR3 form was awaited from a School and that, if it was approved, the PGR4 form for the relevant student would be considered. (Item 3.16)
- 3.10** Noted that a Graduate Training Element would be indicated as being at Level 9. Noted that the Chair would open discussion with QQI about the appropriateness or otherwise of having GTEs at Level 10. (Item 4.1)
- 3.11** The revised module descriptors in respect of the EXTATIC programme were noted as having been approved subject to a modification to one descriptor, that for *FSH509: Special Topics at DCU*, to ensure alignment between the 'Coursework Breakdown' and 'Module Workload and Resources' sections. (Item 4.2)
- 3.12** Noted that the revised policy on Recognition of Prior Learning for research students had been approved by the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 17 January 2013 and would be submitted for the approval of Academic Council at its meeting of 13 February 2013. Noted that the Registry had been asked for advice about the appropriate timeframe for application and also that the associated draft application form would be revised to take account of the policy. (Items 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9)

- 3.13** The guidelines on PhD by publication were approved. The Chair expressed appreciation to all who had submitted feedback on the draft versions. It was noted that these guidelines would necessitate some updating of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* and that this work would be carried out in tandem with the updating of these *Regulations* more generally. With respect to PhDs by publication which are to be submitted for examination before the revised *Regulations* come into force, it was agreed that a slightly modified version of the guidelines, consistent with current *Academic Regulations* would be made available to all concerned. (Item 6.1)
- 3.14** The Chair noted that Budget Committee had provided financial support for the management of the Daniel O’Hare Scholarships and that an announcement about the forthcoming round of these Scholarships would be made in due course. She is to consult the Associate Deans for Research about the fitness for purpose of the management processes as they applied in 2012. She had provided the Senior Management Group with a list of all current scholarships and requested the Deans to identify others that are Faculty based. As an outcome of this exercise, a revised and clearer list of available scholarships will be made available on the Graduate Studies Office web page. As a way of aligning processes further, discussions about management processes in relation to scholarships will take place with Faculty Offices. (Item 7.3)
- 3.15** The Chair undertook to provide comments, from the graduate research perspective, to the working group which is charged with making recommendations about revisions to the policy on plagiarism. (Item 8)
- 3.16** Noted that a revised PGR3 form was awaited from a School. (Item 8.1)
- 3.17** Noted, in respect of a PGR3 form, that confirmation had been obtained that both internal examiners concurred with the recommendation that had been made, and the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 8.3)
- 3.18** Noted, in respect of two PGR3 forms, that it had been confirmed that there was no issue with respect to length of registration, and the forms had therefore been deemed approved. (Items 8.6 and 8.7)
- 3.19** Noted that the indicative word length for a thesis would be the subject of discussion by the GSB at a future meeting. (Item 9)
- 3.20** Noted that a Head of School had confirmed satisfaction with the examining arrangements for a student, and the relevant PGR4 form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 9.8)
- 3.21** Noted, in respect of a PGR4 form, that satisfactory information had been obtained about the experience of the nominated external examiner and the length of registration of the student, and the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 9.24)

- 3.22** Noted, with respect to an external examiner nominated for two students in a School, that the School had opted to have the nominee examine only one of the students and had undertaken to nominate an alternative examiner for the other student. The nomination of the external examiner for the first student was therefore deemed approved. The nomination of the alternative examiner for the other student, Dr Kenneth Stanton of University College Dublin, was approved by Chair's action on 19 December 2012. (Items 9.25 and 9.26)
- 3.23** Noted, with respect to a PGR4 form, that it had been confirmed that no justification for early submission was required, and the form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 9.36)
- 3.24** Noted that information was awaited from a School in respect of a candidate who had requested permission to reside/carry out research abroad. Noted too that, in the context of updating graduate research forms more generally, the form used for requesting such permission (PGR13) would be modified to ensure that it includes an opportunity to provide the reason/justification for residing abroad. (Item 10.2)
- 3.25** Noted, with respect to the proposed assessors for the proposed award of Higher Doctorate, that the GSB membership had confirmed approval of the nominees on 30 November 2012. The approved internal assessor has agreed to undertake the role. Responses are awaited from the approved external assessors. The experience of the current nomination procedure is likely to prove helpful in revising the policy and procedures pertaining to Higher Doctorates, in due course. (Item 10.3)
- 3.26** The Chair noted that Ms Ann McCartney, a research student in the Faculty of Science and Health, had taken up the role of student representative on the Graduate Studies Board/representative of research students at Academic Council, though she was not available to attend the present meeting. She also noted that Ms Paula Sheridan, a student in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, had been selected as the representative to Academic Council of students on taught postgraduate programmes. She expressed her appreciation to Ms McCartney and Ms Sheridan for their willingness to serve in these roles. In a general sense, it was noted that the Students' Union is very open to the enhancement of postgraduate student engagement in both Union activities and University committees. The Chair undertook to facilitate a meeting, in due course, involving representatives from the SU and from Faculties with a view to ensuring a common understanding about issues such as administrative procedures for nomination/election of candidates and durations of terms of office. (Item 11)

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Proposal on the roles and responsibilities of those involved in postgraduate research supervision, support and examination

- 4.1 The Chair expressed appreciation to all who had provided feedback on the draft proposal.
- 4.2 In the discussion that followed, the following were agreed:
- the guidelines document should contain a preliminary statement to the effect that it is not an exhaustive list of the responsibilities of those involved in the supervision and examination of research students and that, as a matter of principle, *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* has primacy as a source of information on regulatory matters
 - the document should contain a generic statement to cover issues relating to the linked colleges
 - the responsibilities of the supervisor should be noted as including a matter referred to in Section 1.1.3 of *Academic Regulations*, i.e. the responsibility to ensure that, where there is a partnership with an external organisation, appropriate arrangements should be in place from the outset
 - the requirement for a supervisor of a Master's student (i.e. that it is not essential for the supervisor to hold a doctorate) should remain as it is (though a change of supervisor would be required in the event that the student transferred to doctoral study)
 - it should normally prove preferable for a Head of School to appoint supervisory panels at a number of fixed times in the year, and to liaise with the Registry accordingly, rather than doing this work on an ongoing basis, given that research students can apply and be admitted at any time of the year; it is essential for Registry to have the information, especially now that panel members are involved at the PGR2 stage
 - the reference to the need for two external examiners where the student is a member of staff should be accompanied by an indication that the *Academic Regulations* provide an indication of how this regulation should be applied
 - of the two potential definitions of internal examiner, the second is preferable to the first
 - it should be stipulated that the independent chair should 'normally' have supervised a student to completion
 - the internal and external examiners' reports should not be exchanged until both are available to the Chair (noted that the practice of exchanging them prior to submission to the Chair was on the decline but that it was likely to take some time before it disappeared completely)
 - it would not be practicable to postpone scheduling the oral examination until both reports were available.
- 4.3 Some additional changes to wording were also agreed.
- 4.4 With respect to staffing matters, it was noted that the definition of senior researcher is the subject of discussions University wide. It was noted too that there is a need to balance continuity of experience for the student and realities in terms of durations of contracts of employment.

- 4.5 It was suggested that, if all concerned were in agreement, an oral examination could be observed by a colleague who was likely to undertake the independent chair role at a future date.
- 4.5 It was noted that, currently, transcripts of results allow for the printing of the names of up to four supervisors.
- 4.5 It was noted that the Chair would give consideration to whether a separate section in the guidelines document should be inserted to cover issues relating to Master's students or a generic statement would be more appropriate.
- 4.6 It was agreed that the Chair would reword the guidelines in terms of what had been agreed and would establish exactly what changes need to be made to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* to ensure conformity between these and the guidelines.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

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

- 5.1 Student ref. GSB/2013/A1/5.1, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 5.2 Student ref. GSB/2013/A1/5.2, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 5.3 Student ref. GSB/2013/A1/5.3, School of Computing
Approved.
- 5.4 Student ref. GSB/2013/A1/5.4, School of Computing
Approved.
- 5.5 Student ref. GSB/2013/A1/5.5, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 5.6 Student ref. GSB/2013/A1/5.6, School of Health and Human Performance
Approved.
- 5.7 Student ref. GSB/2013/A1/5.7, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Engineering
Approved.

Noted that the slash in 'to be completed by Supervisor(s)/Internal Examiner(s)' on the PGR3 form had the potential to cause confusion as to whose responsibility it is to complete the form. Agreed that alignment between this aspect of the form and the relevant section of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* would need to be ensured when graduate research forms were being revised more generally.

6. Appointment of external examiners

- 6.1 Professor Brian Glennon, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 6.2 Professor Prasanta Kumar Dey, Aston University
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.2, PhD, Dublin City University Business School
Approved.
- 6.3 Professor Lisa Jack, University of Portsmouth
Professor William Nixon, University of Dundee.
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.3, PhD, Dublin City University Business School
Professor Jack's nomination was approved. Professor Nixon's nomination was approved subject to confirmation in respect of one element of the information on the PGR4 form.
- 6.4 Professor Madeline Heilmann, New York University
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.4, PhD, Dublin City University Business School
Approved subject to the submission of a revised abstract.
- 6.5 Professor Derek Irvine, University of Nottingham
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.5, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 6.6 Professor Marco Mesiti, University of Milan
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.6, PhD, School of Computing
Approved.
- 6.7 Dr Gerry Mac Ruairc, University College Dublin
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.8, EdD, Education Department, St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 6.8 Professor Michael Hayes, University of Limerick
Student ref. GSB2013/A1/6.7, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.
- 6.9 Dr Paolo Missier, Newcastle University
GSB2013/A1/6.9, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved subject to the submission of a revised abstract.
- 6.10 Dr Pádraig Carmody, Trinity College Dublin¹
GSB2013/A1/6.10, PhD, School of Law and Government
Approved.

Noted that the general issue of recency, as distinct from relevance, of the nominated external examiner's publications merited discussion at a future meeting of the GSB.

¹ The nomination as external examiner was approved subsequent to the meeting of 29 November 2012; however, a change of internal examiner was subsequently proposed and required approval.

7. Other student issues

None.

8. Any other business

- 8.1** Dr Dixon outlined the arrangements for the forthcoming ‘Tell it Straight’ competition for research students, noting that Dr Pádraig Murphy of the School of Communications had made training in the making of submissions for this competition available to research students and that the presentations by finalists, and the announcement of the awards, would take place in The Helix on 14 March 2013. All supervisors are asked to encourage their students to participate.
- 8.2** It was noted that a briefing session on the management of inter-institutional Graduate Training Elements had taken place and had been well attended by administrative staff in particular although it had equally been intended for academic staff. Relevant information is on the staff section of the Graduate Research Office web page.
- 8.3** The importance of timely submission of items for GSB meetings was noted.

Date of next meeting:

**Thursday 7 March 2013
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____