GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday, 13 February 2025
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

A204, Glasnevin Campus

Present: Prof. Conor Brennan, Ms Fiona Brenna, Ms Lisa Buckley, Ms Isabelle Caulfield, Ms Nuala Clancy, Dr Maura Coulter, Dr Brendan Egan, Prof. Yseult Freeney, Dr Alan Gorman, Ms Karen Keating, Prof. Theo Lynn, Dr David Mc Carthy (Secretary), Prof. Sharon O'Brien (Chair), Dr Lisa Van der Werff and Dr Gëzim Visoka

Apologies: Mr Josh King and Dr Tim McCormac

In Attendance: Mr Donnchadh Galvin

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1.   Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2025

The minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2025 were **approved**.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

Matters arising from the meeting of 16 January 2025 were **noted** as follows:

	Item no. from 16 January 2025	*Item*	*Details of decision/actions*	*Status*
3.1	3.1 (Original Ref. Item 7.13, 28 November 2024)	PGR3, School of History and Geography	<u>Decision Deferred</u>. It was <u>noted</u> that the candidate has not signed the PGR3 and consequently does not have recourse to appeal the decision not to confirm them on the PhD register. The Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has agreed to meet separately with the candidate and the Principal Supervisors and Head of School to discuss possible options following the decision not to confirm the candidate on the PhD register.	Ongoing Awaiting update from ADR regarding next steps following meeting with candidate and Principal Supervisor and Head of School.
3.2	3.2 (Original Ref. Item 7.20, 28 November 2024)	PGR3, School of Mathematical Sciences	<u>Approved</u> subject to the Chair verifying that the Internal Examiner has supervised three candidates from early stage through the confirmation/transfer stage and/or completed all elements of professional development for examiners as per Academic Regulation 10.1.	Ongoing Head of School confirmed that Internal Examiner does not meet criteria as per Academic Regulation 10.1. Confirmation examination to be taken again with new Internal Examiner.

3.3	3.3 (Original Ref. Item 10.4, 28 November 2024)	PGR14, School of Computing	Approved subject to the Chair verifying whether a PGR13 is required depending on when the candidate returned to their home country.	Ongoing Awaiting submission of PGR13 by Principal Supervisor.
3.4	7.8	PGR3, School of STEM Education Innovation and Global Studies	Decision Deferred. It was noted that Section B(ii) should be completed jointly by the Principal Supervisor(s) and the Internal Examiner(s). The revised PGR3 may be considered by Chair's Action.	Complete Approved by Chair's Action on 28 January 2025.
3.5	8.4	PGR4, School of Computing	Decision Deferred. It was noted that there is a potential conflict of interest between the Principal Supervisor and the External Examiner (see Academic Regulation 10.2.10). An alternative External Examiner is required and the revised PGR4 must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.	Complete Approved by Chair's Action on 22 January 2025.
3.6	8.6	PGR4, DCU Institute of Education	Decision Deferred. It was noted that clarification is sought regarding the number of PhD candidates examined by the External Examiner. Confirmation is also required that the Internal Examiner has supervised at least 3 candidates from early stage through the confirmation/transfer process and completed all elements of professional development for examiners. If not, an alternative Internal Examiner will be required. The revised PGR4 must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.	Ongoing Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 13 February 2025, Item 7.11.

The Chair provided an update on Item 3.1. The PGR3 was signed by the student as requested and is **approved**.

The Chair requested Prof. Conor Brennan, the Associate Dean for Research (ADR) from the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, to liaise with the Principal Supervisor to have Item 3.3 resolved.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4.   Graduate researcher development

4.1   Graduate Skills Sessions, February – March 2025

The Graduate Studies Office (GSO) provided a list of the Graduate Skills Sessions that will be delivered in February and March 2025.

The Chair called particular attention to new training sessions, including 'Presenting a Conference or Seminar Paper' and 'Articulating Research Impact'. The Chair also asked ADRs to encourage postgraduate research students who commenced their studies in Semester 2 to attend the upcoming orientation session.

The Chair reiterated the importance of principal supervisors having conversations with supervisees about their skills training and career development needs and to inform students about the opportunities available through the Graduate Studies Office and SAGE.

The Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) to promote these sessions in their respective faculties.

Noted

5.   Updates to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* 2025-26

The Chair explained the rationale for each of the proposed changes to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* for the 2025/26 academic year. The following changes were **approved**. Deletion of existing text is indicated by a ~~strikethrough~~, while the addition of new text is underlined.

1. Principles
1.1.1: Included as part of statement on GenAI, confirming that research presented in the thesis must be that completed by the student:

> "The degree of PhD is awarded in recognition of research <u>by the candidate</u> which has made a significant and coherent contribution to knowledge" (pp. 1).

6.6. Readmission
6.6.1: Change indicates that while readmission must be approved by GRSB, it is subject to there being sufficient expertise and capacity in the relevant faculty:

> "Where a student does not register or has no current registration, or a student who has withdrawn from the University, they may apply to the Graduate Research Studies Board for re-admission to the programme, ~~subject to the existence of appropriate supervision experience within the University.~~ <u>Readmission is subject to there being sufficient disciplinary expertise and supervision capacity.</u> Re-admissions should normally be granted in keeping with DCU Marks and Standards, and only in exceptional circumstances" (pp. 11).

8.2. Assessment for confirmation on, or transfer to, the PhD Register
8.2.1: Included to ensure that the oral examination for confirmation/transfer to PhD Register is conducted in-person rather than online and clarify that IE for confirmation/transfer should be selected in accordance with criteria for appointing an IE:

> "Applications from such candidates for confirmation on the PhD register must be supported by the Principal Supervisor and will be subject to both an evaluation of a written submission and a satisfactory performance in an oral examination conducted by the Principal Supervisor and an Internal Examiner (selection based on 10.1), approved by the Head of School. <u>The oral examination should take place on one of the DCU campuses.</u>

It is not allowable that t~~The~~ independent panel member ~~or a colleague who does not themselves have a doctorate~~ is not permitted to act as the internal examiner for confirmation or transfer. <u>The internal examiner should be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in 10.1</u>" (pp. 17).

8.4. Assessment Processes for Candidates for a Research Degree

8.4.7: Rewording as all PhD candidates must undergo oral examination. Confirm that viva voce must proceed, otherwise there would be a procedural irregularity in the examination of the candidate which would be a grounds for appeal:

> "In <u>the</u> case~~s where a viva voce is being held~~ <u>of a PhD or Master's candidate being assessed through a *viva voce* examination</u>, both External and Internal Examiners should send preliminary written reports to the Independent Chairperson of the examination committee prior to the viva voce examination. Once these are all available, the Chairperson shall arrange for copies of preliminary reports from each examiner to be exchanged among all examiners in advance of the viva voce examination, so that they are aware of one another's views. <u>The viva voce must proceed as part of the examination of a PhD candidate. Examiners cannot recommend that the viva voce is deferred based on their examination of the thesis</u>" (pp. 19-20).

8.4.8: Rewording as MRes candidates do not have to undergo an oral examination:

> "In <u>the</u> case~~s where no viva voce is being held~~ <u>of a Master's candidate who is not being assessed through a *viva voce* examination</u>, the examination report forms are completed by both examiners and the Internal Examiner submits them to Registry" (pp. 20).

9.1 Formats of Research Thesis

Requirement for PGR students to declare their use of GenAI Tools in the thesis and relevant PGR Forms, which will be revised to include declaration:

> "<u>For all thesis types, any Generative AI tools used, and the purpose for which they were used, must be declared in the thesis and in the relevant Postgraduate Research (PGR) Forms</u>" (pp. 22).

9.1.2: Included following updates to 'Guidelines on PhD by Publication':

> "<u>Only publications based on work undertaken during the student's period of registration can be included in the thesis without exception.</u> Only peer-reviewed book chapters or papers (published journal papers, or papers accepted for publication) in reputable peer-reviewed outputs for the discipline(s) in question can be considered for inclusion when a thesis is submitted for examination" (pp. 53).

9.1.4: Reflect changes to 'Guidelines on PhD/MA by Creative/Performance Practice': "<u>PhD by Creative/Performance Practice</u> ~~PhD through Creative and/or Performance Practice~~" (pp. 24).

9.1.8: Reflect changes to 'Guidelines on PhD/MA by Creative/Performance Practice': "Master of Arts <u>by Creative/Performance Practice</u> ~~through Creative and/or Performance Practice~~" (pp. 26).

10. Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees
10.1: Confirm that new faculty appointed as IE must complete DCU training and that training completed elsewhere is not equivalent:

> "Newly appointed staff who are being nominated as Internal Examiners ~~will normally be expected~~ <u>must meet these criteria or will be required</u> to complete all elements of professional development for examiners (course and where applicable exam shadowing) ~~as set out above~~ <u>delivered by the University; training completed elsewhere will not be accepted</u>. All nominations of Internal Examiners are submitted for approval to the Graduate Research Studies Board" (pp. 32).

The following change was **<u>not approved</u>**:

9.3 Thesis Ownership and Access

9.3.2: Included to prevent candidates restricting access to thesis based on their plan to publish following completion of examination process:

"When, following completion of the examination process, the student is ready to submit the final hard-bound copy of the thesis and questions of the confidentiality of the contents arise, candidates may request and obtain temporary restriction of access up to a maximum of four years for sufficient cogent reasons, using the appropriate form. Prospective publication of the thesis by the student is not a sufficient reason to restrict access to the thesis" (pp. 27).

It was noted that further work is required to determine the reasons for requesting a temporary restriction of access before proposing any changes to the associated academic regulations.

The following change was considered by the Board:

1.2 Master's Degree by Research

1.2.1: Clarify that Master's by Research by publications is not permitted, which may be explored by faculties to increase publication figures:

"As well as the monograph format, the University offers the opportunity for candidates to submit their research for the award of MA by Research in the format of artefacts such as music compositions, and through creative or performance practice. Candidates cannot submit their research for the award of Master's by Research in the format of published work" (pp. 5).

Decision Deferred – The Board agreed to consider a proposal for allowing Master's by Research candidates to submit in the format of published work before making a decision regarding the associated academic regulations.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

6.   Applications for transfer to the PhD Register or confirmation on the PhD Register (PGR3)

6.1   GRSB2025/ A2/6.1, DCU Business School
         Approved

6.2   GRSB2025/A2/6.2, School of Chemical Sciences
         Approved – The Board noted the late conduct of the oral examination as part of the
         procedure for confirmation on the PhD register. Colleagues are reminded that, as per
         Academic Regulation 8.2.1, this procedure must be undertaken between 12 and 21 months
         after the student's initial registration. Colleagues are requested to be mindful of this
         regulation and to conduct future examinations within the expected window.

6.3   GRSB2025/A2/6.3, School of Computing
         Decision Deferred – It was noted that Section B(ii) does not provide adequate detail about
         the conduct of the oral examination and the performance of the candidate. Section B(ii)
         should also be completed jointly by the Principal Supervisor(s) and the Internal Examiner(s).
         The revised PGR3 must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.

6.4   GRSB2025/A2/6.4, School of Computing
         Approved

6.5   GRSB2025/A2/6.5, School of Computing
         Approved

6.6   GRSB2025/A2/6.6, School of Electronic Engineering
         Approved – The Board noted the late conduct of the oral examination as part of the
         procedure for confirmation on the PhD register. Colleagues are reminded that, as per
         Academic Regulation 8.2.1, this procedure must be undertaken between 12 and 21 months
         after the student's initial registration. Colleagues are requested to be mindful of this
         regulation and to conduct future examinations within the expected window.

6.7   GRSB2025/A2/6.7, School of Inclusive and Special Education
         Decision Deferred – It was noted that Section B(ii) should be completed jointly by the
         Principal Supervisor(s) and the Internal Examiner(s). The revised PGR3 must be submitted to
         GRSB for consideration.

6.8   GRSB2025/A2/6.8, School of Policy and Practice
         Approved

7.   Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)

7.1   GRSB2025/A2/7.1, PhD, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved

7.2   GRSB2025/A2/7.2, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved

7.3   GRSB2025/A2/7.3, PhD, DCU Business School
Not Approved – It was <u>noted</u> that the External Examiner should attend DCU for the purpose
of the *viva voce* examination; a preference of the External Examiner to participate remotely
is not sufficient reason for holding a hybrid *viva voce* examination.

7.4   GRSB2025/A2/7.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved

7.5   GRSB2025/A2/7.5, PhD, School of Computing
Approved

7.6   GRSB2025/A2/7.6, PhD, School of Computing
Approved

7.7   GRSB2025/A2/7.7, PhD, School of English
Approved – It was <u>noted</u> that the Internal Examiner should complete the necessary training
on examining postgraduate research students.

7.8   GRSB2025/A2/7.8, DProfElite, School of Health and Human Performance
Decision Deferred – It was <u>noted</u> that a sufficient case was not made for allowing early
submission. However, the Board agreed to consider the PGR4 Form at its next meeting on 27
March 2025.

7.9   GRSB2025/A2/7.9, DProfElite, School of Health and Human Performance
        Decision Deferred – It was <u>noted</u> that a sufficient case was not made for allowing early submission. It was further <u>noted</u> that there is an outstanding reciprocal arrangement query regarding the nominated External Examiner. As per Regulation 10.2.6, "a year should elapse between appointments involving the same Schools/Departments". Justification for this nomination must be provided or an alternative External Examiner nominated. The PGR4 Form should be resubmitted for consideration at its next meeting on 27 March 2025.

7.10   GRSB2025/A2/7.10, PhD, School of Human Development
        Approved

7.11   GRSB2025/A2/7.11, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
        Approved

7.12   GRSB2025/A2/7.12, PhD, School of Law and Government
        Approved

7.13   GRSB2025/A2/7.13, PhD, School of Law and Government
        Approved

7.14   GRSB2025/A2/7.14, PhD, School of Law and Government
        Approved

7.15   GRSB2025/A2/7.15, PhD, School of Law and Government
        Approved – It was <u>noted</u> that the Internal Examiner should complete all elements of professional development for examiners delivered by the University.

7.16   GRSB2025/A2/7.16, PhD, School of Psychology
        Approved

7.17   GRSB2025/A2/7.17, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
        Approved

8.   Request for Extension to Maximum Registration Period OR Re-admission to the Research Programme (PGR14)

8.1   GRSB2025/A2/ 8.1, PhD, School of Human Development
        Noted

9.   Any other business

There were no items of other business.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Date of next meeting

Thursday, 27 March 2025

10.00 a.m.

A204, Glasnevin Campus