

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday, 28 November 2024

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

F327, St. Pat's Campus

Present: Dr Conor Brennan, Ms Fiona Brennan, Ms Lisa Buckley, Ms Isabelle Caulfield, Dr Maura Coulter, Dr Alan Gorman, Mr Josh King, Prof. Theo Lynn, Dr David Mc Carthy (Secretary), Prof. Sharon O'Brien (Chair), Dr Lisa Van der Werff and Dr Gözim Visoka

Apologies: Ms Nuala Clancy, Prof. Yseult Freeney, Prof. Timo Gans, Ms Karen Keating and Dr Tim McCormac

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 17 October 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 17 October 2024 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Matters arising from the meeting of 17 October 2024 were noted as follows:

	<i>Item no. from 17 October 2024</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Details of decision/actions</i>	<i>Status</i>
3.1	3.6 (Original Ref. Item 9.50, 15 August 2024)	PGR3, School of Physical Sciences	<u>Decision Deferred</u> . It was <u>noted</u> that Section C should be completed jointly by the Principal Supervisor(s) and Internal Examiner(s). The revised PGR3 must be submitted to GRSB.	Ongoing Awaiting submission of revised PGR3 from Principal Supervisor.
3.2	12.8	PGR13, School of Mathematical Sciences	<u>Approved</u> subject to Section B being completed by the Principal Supervisor, which should be verified by the Chair.	Ongoing Awaiting submission of revised PGR13 from Principal Supervisor.
3.3	3.1 (Original Ref. Item 7.10, 25 April 2024)	PGR4, DCU Institute of Education	The Chair provided an update on Item 3.1, setting out the rationale provided regarding the reciprocal arrangement query raised with the Head of School, which was considered by the Board. The PGR4 was not approved. It was noted that an alternative External Examiner is required and the revised PGR4 may be considered by Chairs Action.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 28 November, Item 8.16.
3.4	3.2 (Original Ref. Item 9.11, 15 August 2024)	PGR3, School of Communications	<u>Approved</u> subject to Chair confirming the Joint Award agreement for this candidate with the Principal Supervisor.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 28 November, Item 7.3.

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3.5	3.5 (Original Ref. Item 9.42, 15 August 2024)	PGR3, School of Law and Government	<u>Decision Deferred</u> . It was <u>noted</u> that confirmation is required that the Internal Examiner is experienced in supervising research students. If the Internal Examiner has not supervised three candidates from early stage through the confirmation/transfer stage and/or completed all elements of professional development for examiners (AR 10.1), an alternative Internal Examiner will be required and the revised PGR3 submitted to GRSB.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 28 November, Item 7.19.
3.6	10.15	PGR3, School of Health and Human Performance	<u>Decision Deferred</u> . It was <u>noted</u> that the student is not currently registered. The PGR3 should be resubmitted to GRSB once the student has registered for the current academic year.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 28 November, Item 7.12.
3.7	11.19	PGR4, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering	<u>Decision Deferred</u> . It was <u>noted</u> that the student is not currently registered. The PGR4 should be resubmitted to GRSB once the student has registered for the current academic year.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 28 November, Item 8.12.
3.8	11.20	PGR4, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health	<u>Decision Deferred</u> . It was <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 revised PGR4 must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.	Complete Approved by Chair's Action on 22 October 2024.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Graduate researcher development

4.1 Graduate Skills Sessions, December 2024 – January 2025

The Graduate Studies Office (GSO) provided a list of the Graduate Skills Sessions that will be delivered in December 2024 and January 2025. The Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) to promote these sessions in their respective faculties.

The Chair informed the Board that the schedule of Graduates Skills Session for Semester 2 of the current academic year will be made available via the GSO website in the coming weeks.

Noted

5. Report from GRSB Appeals Standing Committee

The Chair introduced the report from the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) Appeals Standing Committee, which met on 6 November 2024 to consider an appeal submitted by a PhD student.

The Chair set out the context of the appeal and the two grounds upon which the appeal was being sought. She informed the Board that the student appealed a decision not to allow progression to the next year of study, on the grounds that:

- i. there were extenuating circumstances that the supervisory panel or examiners were not aware of because the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the decision was made and which would have made a real and substantial difference to that decision.
- ii. there is evidence of a material administrative error or a material irregularity in assessment procedures which has made a real and substantial difference to the decision of the supervisory panel or the outcome of an examination.

The Committee decided to uphold the appeal on both grounds cited by the student.

It was agreed by the Committee that the extenuating circumstances, if disclosed to the principal supervisors in advance of the Annual Progress Review (APR) meeting on 14 June 2024, would have made a real and substantial difference to the decision that was made, i.e. requiring the student to complete considerable revisions to her methodology chapter and prepare for a further APR meeting during a very challenging period.

It was also agreed by the Committee that there is evidence of a material irregularity in the assessment procedures relating to APR which made a real and substantial difference to the decision of the supervisory panel.

The decision of GRSB Appeals Standing Committee was **approved**. The Chair informed the Board that the outcome is that the candidate should be permitted to progress to the next year of study and to register in the current academic year.

It was agreed that the Secretary will issue the formal outcome letter to the student and will prepare a report for Academic Council, which will be submitted for noting at its meeting on 5 February 2025. It was further agreed that the Chair will inform the relevant Head of School of the outcome and will arrange to meet them along with the ADR to discuss the issues that were raised by GRSB Standing Committee during its consideration of the appeal.

6. DkIT Annual Report

This item was deferred to the January meeting of GRSB.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

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

7.1 GRSB2024/A8/7.1, DCU Business School
Approved

7.2 GRSB2024/A8/7.2, DCU Business School
Approved

7.3 GRSB2024/A8/7.3, School of Communications
Approved

- 7.4 GRSB2024/A8/7.4, School of Computing
Approved
- 7.5 GRSB2024/A8/7.5, School of Computing
Approved
- 7.6 GRSB2024/A8/7.6, School of Computing
Approved – It was noted that the Principal Supervisor and candidate should refer to 'Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners on PhD by Publication' so that both are aware of the requirements for this particular format of thesis.
- 7.7 GRSB2024/A8/7.7, School of Business and Humanities, DkIT
Approved
- 7.8 GRSB2024/A8/7.8, School of Engineering, DkIT
Approved
- 7.9 GRSB2024/A8/7.9, School of Health and Science, DkIT
Approved
- 7.10 GRSB2024/A8/7.10, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, DkIT
Approved
- 7.11 GRSB2024/A8/7.11, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, DkIT
Approved
- 7.12 GRSB2024/A8/7.12, School of Health and Human Performance
Approved
- 7.13 GRSB2024/A8/7.13, School of History and Geography
Decision Deferred – It was noted that the candidate has not signed the PGR3 and consequently does not have recourse to appeal a 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 recommendation not to confirm the candidate on the PhD register.
- 7.14 GRSB2024/A8/7.14, School of Human Development
Approved

- 7.15 GRSB2024/A8/7.15, School of Language, Literacy and ECE
Approved
- 7.16 GRSB2024/A8/7.16, School of Law and Government
Approved
- 7.17 GRSB2024/A8/7.17, School of Law and Government
Approved – It was noted that the Internal Examiner switched to Independent Panel Member five days after the confirmation examination. The supervisory panel is reminded that no one who previously held the position of Independent Panel Member can be appointed as Internal Examiner on the examination panel.
- 7.18 GRSB2024/A8/7.18, School of Law and Government
Approved
- 7.19 GRSB2024/A8/7.19, School of Law and Government
Approved
- 7.20 GRSB2024/A8/7.20, School of Mathematical Sciences
Approved 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.
- 7.21 GRSB2024/A8/7.21, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved
- 7.22 GRSB2024/A8/7.22, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved
- 7.23 GRSB2024/A8/7.23, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved
- 8. Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)**
- 8.1 GRSB2024/A8/8.1, PhD, School of Communications
Approved

- 8.2 GRSB2024/A8/8.2, PhD, School of Computing
Not Approved – It was noted that the External Examiner does not meet the requirement as per Academic Regulation 10.2.10, namely that the External Examiner "have no professional relationship with the candidate, supervisor(s) or other examiner(s)". An alternative External Examiner is required and the revised PGR4 must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.
- 8.3 GRSB2024/A8/8.3, PhD, School of Engineering, DkIT
Approved
- 8.4 GRSB2024/A8/8.4, PhD, School of Engineering, DkIT
Approved
- 8.5 GRSB2024/A8/8.5, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 8.6 GRSB2024/A8/8.6, PhD, School of English
Approved
- 8.7 GRSB2024/A8/8.7, PhD, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge
Decision Deferred – It was noted that the Internal Examiner has not completed all elements of professional development for examiners. Confirmation is required that the Internal Examiner has completed the necessary training on examining postgraduate research students or will complete the upcoming training session. Once received, the PGR4 may be approved by Chair's Action.
- 8.8 GRSB2024/A8/8.8, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Not Approved – It was noted that the External Examiner does not meet the requirements as per Academic Regulation 10.2.9, "experience in supervising research students to completion at the level of the award being sought" and "experience in the examination process of such students at the level of the award being sought". An alternative External Examiner is required and the revised PGR4 must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.
- 8.9 GRSB2024/A8/8.9, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved
- 8.10 GRSB2024/A8/8.10, PhD, School of Law and Government
Approved

8.11 GRSB2024/A8/8.11, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved

8.12 GRSB2024/A8/8.12, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved

8.13 GRSB2024/A8/8.13, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved

8.14 GRSB2024/A8/8.14, PhD, School of STEM Ed, Innovation and Global Studies
Approved

8.15 GRSB2024/A8/8.15, PhD, School of Communications
Noted – Approved by Chair’s Action on 25 October 2024.

8.16 GRSB2024/A8/8.16, PhD, School of Human Development
Approved

8.17 GRSB2024/A8/8.17, PhD, School of Mathematical Sciences
Approved

9. Notice of Intention to Reside/Carry out Research Abroad (PGR13)

9.1 GRSB2024/A8/9.1, PhD, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved – It was noted that one of the supervisors is on sabbatical leave and that it was stated they were not available for administrative tasks. The Board wishes to highlight that, in such circumstances, either the supervisor continues with supervision (which is the preferable option), or the School must determine whether or not a replacement supervisor is needed (see Academic Regulation 7.7.2). If the School determines that no replacement is needed, it is assumed that the colleague will continue with supervision, including any associated administrative tasks linked to that supervision.

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

10.1 GRSB2024/A8/10.1, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved

- 10.2 GRSB2024/A8/10.2, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved
- 10.3 GRSB2024/A8/10.3, PhD, School of Communications
Approved – It was noted that the extension is granted with the conditions that the candidate submit two literature review chapters in February 2025 and successfully complete the confirmation process by the end of March 2025. No further extensions, deferrals or suspensions will be granted by the Board if these conditions are not met.
- 10.4 GRSB2024/A8/10.4, PhD, School of Computing
Approved subject to the Chair verifying whether a PGR13 is required depending on when the candidate returned to their home country.
- 10.5 GRSB2024/A8/10.5, PhD, School of Language, Literacy and ECE
Noted – Approved by Chair’s Action on 25 October 2024.
- 10.6 GRSB2024/A8/10.6, PhD, School of Law and Government
Noted – Approved by Chair’s Action on 25 October 2024 with the understanding that the thesis will be submitted for examination by the end of December 2024.
- 10.7 GRSB2024/A8/10.7, MA, School of Psychology
Noted – Approved by Chair’s Action on 4 November 2024.
- 11. Any other business**
- 11.1 The Chair asked the ADRs to remind colleagues in their respective faculties that if a student they are supervising is resident outside Ireland for six months or more, GRSB must be informed as per Academic Regulation 4.6 via the PGR13 process.
- 11.2 Dr Conor Brennan raised a query regarding the letter to be issued to External Supervisors, which was approved by GRSB on 17 October 2024 (GRSB2024/A7/7). At the Faculty Management Board in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, the Heads of School raised a concern about being responsible for issuing these letters.

The Chair confirmed that the intention is to establish a standardised practice in each faculty and that responsibility for issuing these letters does not necessarily have to reside with the Head of School. The Chair suggested that the Principal Supervisor should issue this letter in the first instance, with support from the research administrator or faculty administrative staff where possible.

- 11.3 Dr Maura Coulter queried how students will register for GTE Modules in Semester 2. Ms Lisa Buckley confirmed that DCU Key will be reopened during the change of mind period and that postgraduate research students will be able to register for Semester 2 GTE Modules during this time. Ms Buckley agreed to provide further information to the ADRs once she liaises with relevant colleagues in Registry.
- 11.4 Dr Brennan raised a query regarding the resources that will be made available to staff for using CRM. The Chair emphasised the importance that clear instructions are provided to support staff when using the system. Dr Coulter agreed to share the standard operating procedure developed by DCU Institute of Institution so it can be configured to meet the specific requirements of individual faculties.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting

Thursday, 16 January 2025

10.00 a.m.

A204, Glasnevin Campus