

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday, 26 May 2022

9:30 am – 11:30 am

Zoom Meeting

Present: Ms Isabelle Caulfield, Prof. Edel Conway, Dr Maura Coulter, Ms Karen Keating, Dr Gillian Lake, Dr Pascal Landais, Prof. Christine Loscher, Dr David Mc Carthy (Secretary), Dr Tim McCormac, Ms Niamh McMahon, Ms Siúin McManus, Prof. Sharon O'Brien, Ms Christina O'Keeffe, Dr Sally Smith and Prof. Joseph Stokes (Chairperson)

Apologies: Prof. David Collings

In Attendance: Mr Waqar Ahmed and Ms Gráinne Curran

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 28 April 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 28 April 2022 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Matters arising from the meeting of 28 April 2022 were **noted** as follows:

	Item no. from 28 April 2022	Item	Details of decision/actions	Status
3.1	3.1 (Original Ref. Item 12.1, 21 October 2021)	PGR15, School of Computing	Not approved. It was noted that the form is incomplete and that the required supporting documentation has not been submitted.	Ongoing
3.2	3.2 (Original Ref. Item 9.22, 8 April 2021)	PGR4, School of Health and Human Performance	Thesis issued to examination panel in September 2021 but approved External Examiner no longer available. PGR4 to be resubmitted with new External Examiner nomination.	Ongoing
3.3	3.4 (Original Ref. Item 5.1, 2 December 2021)	Guidance on the electronic completion and submission of GRSB papers	Guidance to be documented and circulated. To include acceptable signature formats, the submission of fully completed forms and strict adherence to deadlines.	Ongoing
3.4	3.6 (Original Ref. Item 7.7, 31 March 2022)	PGR3, School of Electronic Engineering	Decision deferred. It was noted that Section C is not complete. May be considered by Chairs Action.	Ongoing
3.5	3.4 (Original Ref. Item 7, 20 January 2022)	Guidance on the use of video-conferencing for <i>viva voce</i> examinations	Guidance to be updated to reflect learnings from recent months.	Included on Agenda, Item 5

3.6	3.5 (Original Ref. Item 5, 31 March 2022)	Change to PGR15 Form / Process – Application for Transfer / Advanced Entry to Postgraduate Research Programme	Two changes to the PGR15 that were proposed by Registry were approved. The Chair and Registry will develop a criterion relating to ethical approval, which will be reviewed by DCU Ethics Committee before it is included in the form.	Included on Agenda, Item 6
3.7	3.7 (Original Ref. Item 8.30, 31 March 2022)	PGR4, School of Electronic Engineering	Decision deferred. It was noted that the examination panel must include one female member. This can be achieved through the appointment of the Independent Chairperson. The nomination of a female panel member should be submitted to GRSB for consideration.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action, 12 th May 2022
3.8	3.8 (Original Ref. Item 8.58, 31 March 2022)	PGR4, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering	Decision deferred. It was noted that justification is required for how the student is ready to submit the PGR4 so soon after the PRG3 confirmation examination and why the confirmation exercise was not conducted within the timeline as per Regulation 8.2.1. This should be provided to GRSB for consideration.	Complete Included on Agenda, Item 9.19
3.9	3.10 (Original Ref. Item 9.4, 31 March 2022)	PGR13, School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education	Approved subject to confirmation of the start and end dates for the period that the student will reside abroad. To be verified by the Chair.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action, 9 th May 2022
3.10	3.15 (Original Ref. Item 8.44, 31 March 2022)	PGR4, School of Human Development	Decision deferred. It was noted that the External Examiner does not meet the requirements as per Regulation 10.2.9. A different nomination for External Examiner is required and	Complete Included on Agenda, Item 9.12

			must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.	
3.11	3.17 (Original Ref. Item 8.51, 31 March 2022)	PGR4, School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education	Decision deferred. The Memo was considered by GRSB. The Board decided that the External Examiner does not meet the requirement, as per Regulation 10.2.9, of having experience in supervising research students to completion at the level of the award being sought and in the examination process of such students at the level of the award being sought. The experience of external examiners as per the regulations is considered on an individual basis rather than on the collective experience of the panel.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action, 11 th May 2022
3.12	3.18 (Original Ref. Item 8.55, 31 March 2022)	PGR4, School of Law and Government	Decision deferred. The Memo was considered by GRSB. The Board decided that the External Examiner does not meet the requirement, as per Regulation 10.2.9, of having experience in supervising research students to completion at the level of the award being sought and in the examination process of such students at the level of the award being sought. The experience of external examiners as per the regulations is considered on an individual basis rather than on the collective experience of the panel.	Complete Included on Agenda, Item 9.17

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3.13	8.7	PGR4, School of Human Development	It was noted that the External Examiner does not meet the requirements as per Regulation 10.2.9.	Complete Included on Agenda, Item 9.13
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It was **noted** that the status of Item 3.1 should be changed to complete. The PGR13 and PGR15 are currently outstanding and the Chair has agreed to contact the Principal Supervisor to determine the status of the candidate.

It was **noted** that the details of decision/actions for Item 3.2 should be updated to indicate that the approved External Examiner is no longer available and that a revised PGR must be provided with a new External Examiner nomination.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Graduate researcher development

4.1 DCU Business School Doctoral Pathway 2022/23

Noted

4.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing Doctoral Pathways 2022/23

4.2.1 School of Computing

Noted

4.2.2 School of Electronic Engineering

Noted

4.2.3 School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

Noted

4.2.4 Centre for Doctoral Training in Advanced Metallic Systems (AMSCDT)

Noted

4.2.5 Centre for Research Training in Artificial Intelligence

Noted

4.2.6 Centre for Research Training in Digitally-Enhanced Reality (D-Real)

Noted

4.2.7 Centre for Research Training in Machine Learning

Noted

4.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Doctoral Pathways 2022/23

4.3.1 School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies (SALIS)

Noted

4.3.2 School of Communications

Noted

4.3.3 School of English

Noted

4.3.4 Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge

Noted

4.3.5 School of History and Geography

Noted

4.3.6 School of Law and Government

Noted

4.3.7 School of Theology, Philosophy and Music

Noted

4.4 DCU Institute of Education Doctoral Pathway 2022/23

Noted

4.5 Faculty of Science and Health Doctoral Pathways 2022/23

4.5.1 School of Biotechnology
Noted

4.5.2 School of Chemical Sciences
Noted

4.5.3 School of Health and Human Performance
Noted

4.5.4 School of Mathematical Sciences
Noted

4.5.5 School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health
Noted

4.5.6 School of Physical Sciences
Noted

4.5.7 School of Psychology
Noted

5. Guidance on the use of videoconferencing for *viva voce* examinations

The Chair informed members that *Procedures for Conducting a Viva Voce using Videoconferencing* has not substantially changed since it was last considered by GRSB on 20th January 2022 (GRSB/2022/A1/7).

The Chair confirmed that DCU will continue to operate three formats for *viva voce* examinations: in-person, hybrid and fully online. In the case of hybrid examinations, which involve the external examiner attending remotely, this arrangement must be approved by the relevant Head of School. In the case of fully online examinations, which involve the candidate attending remotely, this arrangement must be approved by GRSB.

The Chair informed members that guidance on the use of videoconferencing for *viva voce* examinations is divided into two sections: (1) The context in which a virtual *viva voce* examination may be considered and (2) Technical issues.

The Chair confirmed that, in this instance, GRSB is only being asked to consider Section 1, the guidance on the context in which a virtual *viva voce* examination may be considered, as Section 2, the guidance on the technical issues, must be discussed with Information Systems Services (ISS) before it can be submitted to GRSB for consideration at a later date.

The Chair informed members that the Irish Universities Association (IUA) has agreed that “exceptional” should be used to describe the circumstances in which the candidate will attend the *viva voce* examination remotely. It was agreed by GRSB that such requests remain “exceptional” and that DCU would continue to remain aligned to its IUA counterparts. The Chair **noted** the recommendation that Section 1.5 is amended to remove “the most” from the opening sentence, “only in *the most* exceptional circumstances should consideration be given to using videoconferencing on the grounds that the candidate is in a remote location”. Following this amendment, the guidance in Section 1, “The context in which a virtual *viva voce* examination may be considered”, was **approved**.

The Chair **noted** that the candidate’s preference for a particular format of examination should be prioritised in all instances and that candidates should be encouraged to have a discussion with their supervisor(s) regarding their preference when nominations for external examiners are being considered rather than waiting until the thesis/artefact has been submitted to Registry and issued to examiners.

Prof. Christine Loscher proposed that the PGR4 Form (Notification of Intention to Submit Thesis for Examination) could be amended to include a declaration that the candidate has discussed his/her preference for a particular format of examination with his/her supervisor(s).

Niamh McMahon proposed that this declaration could include a hyperlink to a guidance document that outlines the standard practices for how *viva voce* examinations are conducted and provides the candidate with the necessary information on the three formats for *viva voce* examinations and the responsibilities of the different members of the examination panel.

The Chair **noted** that the PGR4 Form could be used to prompt the discussion between the candidate and his/her supervisor(s) regarding his/her preferred format of examination but that it should not be amended to allow the candidate to indicate his/her preference as GRSB is not required to approve a candidate’s request to conduct his/her examination according to either the in-person or hybrid format.

The Chair **noted** that it will not be possible to update the PGR4 Form and for this to be approved by GRSB before the commencement of the 2022/23 academic year as the amendments might require changes to the academic regulations. It was **agreed** that the PGR4 Form will be updated and approved by GRSB during the 2022/23 academic year in preparation for its implementation in September 2023, while the guidance document will be developed and provided to candidates during the 2022/23 academic year.

The Chair informed members that he is continuing to approve requests for fully online *viva voce* examinations via Chairs Action, an arrangement that has been in place since March 2020. It was **agreed** that the approval process for these requests will be considered at a later meeting of GRSB,

6. Change to PGR15 Form/Process – Application for Transfer/Advanced Entry to Postgraduate Research Programme

The Chair informed members that the proposed changes to the PGR15 Form are in response to issues raised when this item was last considered by GRSB at its meeting on 31 March 2022 (GRSB/2022/A3).

The Chair consulted with DCU Ethics Committee Chairperson regarding the confirmation of a candidate's ethical approval when he/she applies to transfer to a DCU postgraduate research programme. The Chair confirmed that DCU Ethics Committee will not provide ethical approval for students who transfer to a DCU postgraduate research programme but rather will endorse the ethical approval provided by the student's home institution on the basis that this aligns with DCU's processes and standards. The Chair confirmed that any issues that arise regarding a student's ethical approval will be referred to the institution that provided the ethical approval rather than DCU Ethics Committee.

The following changes to the PGR15 Form were proposed:

- Update to the additional criteria in the applicant declaration section that was approved by GRSB on 31st March 2022. For consistency of language purposes, change second-person possessive to first-person possessive: "That ~~you~~ my current supervisor in ~~your~~ my institution supports this transfer (no IP transfer issues etc.)".
Approved

- Inclusion of an additional criterion in the applicant declaration section, with a small amendment to what was originally proposed: “~~Whether~~ Did your current research studies require University Ethical approval? If yes, please provide the appropriate ethical submission and the institutional approval letter”. **Approved**
- Require that the proposed principal supervisor attest that the research completed to date by the student is in accordance with the ethical approval received. Proposed wording: “Where University Ethical approval was granted by the previous Institution, please provide details below attesting that the research conducted to date was carried out in line with that approved”. **Approved**

Niamh McMahon confirmed that the PGR15 Form will be updated to include the changes approved by GRSB on 31st March 2022 and at today’s meeting. This new version of the PGR15 Form will be used by Registry from September 2022 onward.

7. Principles for provision of teaching experience to research students

The Chair informed members that background information regarding this item was provided to the Associate Deans of Research in advance of today’s meeting. This outlined the requests made by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, namely, that:

1. the higher education sector undertakes an exercise to agree a set of high-level principles to which all HEIs can work towards
2. each institution conducts a gap analysis to determine the next steps in progressing towards greater congruence and transparency in arrangements for the payment of postgraduate researcher students involved in teaching activities.

Regarding the first request, the Chair informed members that the Irish University Association (IUA) will develop a set of overarching principles for the provision of teaching experience to postgraduate research students. It was **agreed** that relevant members would input into and provide feedback on a list of proposed principles for the University by 3rd June 2022 via a shared document. The Chair **noted** that these principles and this feedback would be presented to IUA for consideration as it develops its set of overarching principles.

Regarding the second request, the Chair **noted** that postgraduate research students should be remunerated for undertaking teaching activities regardless of whether they are self-funded or in receipt of research funding or a scholarship/stipend.

The Chair informed members that the gap analysis has been completed by the Graduate Studies Office, and while there is general consistency across the University, DCU is responding to the Minister's requests in this regard.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

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

8.1 GRSB2022/A5/8.1, School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies
Approved

8.2 GRSB2022/A5/8.2, School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies
Approved

8.3 GRSB2022/A5/8.3, School of Biotechnology
Approved

8.4 GRSB2022/A5/8.4, School of Biotechnology
Approved

8.5 GRSB2022/A5/8.5, School of Communications
Approved

8.6 GRSB2022/A5/8.6, School of Computing
Approved

8.7 GRSB2022/A5/8.7, School of Computing
Approved

8.8 GRSB2022/A5/8.8, School of Engineering, DkIT
Approved

- 8.9 GRSB2022/A5/8.9, School of Informatics & Creative Arts, DkIT
Approved
- 8.10 GRSB2022/A5/8.10, School of English
Decision Deferred – It was **noted** that the input and commentary of the supervisor should be provided. The updated PGR3 may be considered by Chairs Action.
- 8.11 GRSB2022/A5/8.11, School of Language, Literacy & Early Childhood Education
Approved
- 8.12 GRSB2022/A5/8.12, School of Theology, Philosophy & Music
Approved
- 9. Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)**
- 9.1 GRSB2022/A5/9.1, PhD, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved
- 9.2 GRSB2022/A5/9.2, MSc, School of Biotechnology
Approved
- 9.3 GRSB2022/A5/9.3, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved
- 9.4 GRSB2022/A5/9.4, MSc, School of Biotechnology
Approved
- 9.5 GRSB2022/A5/9.5, PhD, School of Computing
Approved
- 9.6 GRSB2022/A5/9.6, MSc, School of Health Sciences, DkIT
Approved
- 9.7 GRSB2022/A5/9.7, PhD, School of Health Sciences, DkIT
Approved

- 9.8 GRSB2022/A5/9.8, PhD, School of Health Sciences, DkIT
Approved – It was **noted** that one of the External Examiners, Prof Graham McGeown, will fulfil the role of the Internal Examiner as there is no suitable candidate within DkIT with the necessary specialist knowledge.
- 9.9 GRSB2022/A5/9.9, PhD, School of English
Approved
- 9.10 GRSB2022/A5/9.10, PhD, Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge
Approved
- 9.11 GRSB2022/A5/9.11, PhD, School of History & Geography
Approved
- 9.12 GRSB2022/A5/9.12, EdD, School of Human Development
Approved
- 9.13 GRSB2022/A5/9.13, EdD, School of Human Development
Approved
- 9.14 GRSB2022/A5/9.14, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved
- 9.15 GRSB2022/A5/9.15, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved
- 9.16 GRSB2022/A5/9.16, PhD, School of Language, Literacy & Early Childhood Education
Approved
- 9.17 GRSB2022/A5/9.17, LLM, School of Law & Government
Approved
- 9.18 GRSB2022/A5/9.18, MPhil, School of Law & Government
Approved
- 9.19 GRSB2022/A5/9.19, PhD, School of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering
Approved

9.20 GRSB2022/A5/9.20, DPsych, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Community Health
Approved

9.21 GRSB2022/A5/9.21, PhD, School of Policy & Practice
Approved

9.22 GRSB2022/A5/9.22, PhD, School of Arts, Education & Movement
Approved

9.23 GRSB2022/A5/9.23, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved

9.24 GRSB2022/A5/9.24, MA, School of Informatics & Creative Arts, DkIT
Approved

9.25 GRSB2022/A5/9.25, PhD, School of Informatics & Creative Arts, DkIT
Approved

9.26 GRSB2022/A5/9.26, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
Noted – Approved by Chairs Action on 18 May 2022.

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

10.1 GRSB2022/A5/10.1, MSc, School of Biotechnology
Approved

10.2 GRSB2022/A5/10.2, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved

10.3 GRSB2022/A5/10.3, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved

10.4 GRSB2022/A5/10.4, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved

- 10.5 GRSB2022/A5/10.5, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 10.6 GRSB2022/A5/10.6, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 10.7 GRSB2022/A5/10.7, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 10.8 GRSB2022/A5/10.8, PhD, School of Communications
Approved
- 10.9 GRSB2022/A5/10.9, PhD, School of Communications
Approved
- 10.10 GRSB2022/A5/10.10, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 10.11 GRSB2022/A5/10.11, PhD, School of English
Approved
- 10.12 GRSB2022/A5/10.12, PhD, School of English
Approved
- 10.13 GRSB2022/A5/10.13, PhD, School of Health & Human Performance
Approved
- 10.14 GRSB2022/A5/10.14, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved
- 10.15 GRSB2022/A5/10.15, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved
- 10.16 GRSB2022/A5/10.16, PhD, School of Law & Government
Approved
- 10.17 GRSB2022/A5/10.17, DPsych, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy & Community Health
Approved

- 10.18 GRSB2022/A5/10.18, PhD, School of STEM Education, Innovation & Global Studies
Approved
- 10.19 GRSB2022/A5/10.19, PhD, School of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering
Approved
- 10.20 GRSB2022/A5/10.20, EdD, School of Policy & Practice
Approved
- 10.21 GRSB2022/A5/10.21, PhD, School of Computing
Approved

11. Any other business

The Chair **noted** that GRSB will return to in-person meetings for the 2022/23 academic year with the exception of the January meeting, which will take place via Zoom. It was **noted** that the June meeting will take place on the St. Patrick's campus, with the remaining six meetings taking place on the Glasnevin campus. The Secretary will provide members with the details of the dates and locations of the meetings of GRSB for the 2022/23 academic year at the next meeting of GRSB.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting

Thursday, 18 August 2022
at 9.30 a.m.
Zoom meeting