

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday, 27 April 2023

10:00 am – 1:00 pm

A204, Glasnevin Campus

Present: Ms Lisa Buckley, Ms Isabelle Caulfield, Prof. Edel Conway, Dr Maura Coulter, Prof. Timo Gans, Ms Karen Keating, Dr Pascal Landais, Dr David Mc Carthy (Secretary), Dr Tim McCormac, Mr Muhammad Mubashar Saeed, Prof. Sharon O'Brien, Dr Niamh O'Sullivan, Dr Sally Smith, Prof. Joseph Stokes (Chair) and Dr Lisa Van der Werff.

Apologies: Dr Gillian Lake

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 30 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 30 March 2023 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Matters arising from the meeting of 30 March 2023 were **noted** as follows:

	<i>Item no. from 30 March 2023</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Details of decision/actions</i>	<i>Status</i>
3.1	3.1 (Original Ref. Item 13.3, 20 October 2022)	PGR4, School of Biotechnology	Decision deferred. It was noted that there is a potential conflict of interest between one of the Supervisors and the External Examiner. An alternative External Examiner nomination is required or an explanation for how a conflict of interest will be avoided. The updated PGR4 must be considered by GRSB.	Ongoing Principal Supervisor requested to provide a Memo to GRSB, detailing the status regarding submission by the June 2023 softbound thesis deadline in light of the final PGR14 granted; the reasons why the nominated alternative External Examiner could not be used; and providing the reasons an updated PGR4 has not been provided.

3.2	8.16	PGR4, School of Computing	Decision deferred. It was noted that details regarding the External Examiner's affiliation with a Higher Education Institution should be provided, in particular, the dates of the affiliation and supervision of research students.	Ongoing Details provided by Principal Supervisor and forwarded to Chair for consideration.
3.3	8.17	PGR4, School of Computing	Following the outcome (approved) being issued, the External Examiner advised that he has published several times with the Secondary Supervisor. This item has been reopened as approval of the External Examiner violates Academic Regulation 10.2.10.	Ongoing Nomination of an alternative External Examiner requested from supervisory panel.
3.4	5	Update to PGR4 Form (Conducting a viva voce online or using videoconferencing facilities)	Decision deferred. All updated documentation and processes relating to this item, e.g. PGR4 Form, PGR6 Form, Drupal Form, etc., will be submitted to GRSB for noting at its next meeting.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 27 April 2023, Item 5

3.5	8.2	PGR4, School of Arts Education and Movement	Decision deferred. It was noted that the expertise of the External Examiner must be confirmed, either by including a list of recent, relevant publications or justification being provided by the Principal Supervisor.	Complete Included on the Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 27 April 2023, Item 8.1
3.6	8.27	PGR4, DCU Institute of Education	Decision Deferred. It was noted that clarification is required regarding the External Examiner's experience in supervising research students to completion. The PGR4 for his previous appointment as an External Examiner (GRSB2020/A3/10.24) indicates that he does have this experience, whereas the current PGR4 indicates that he does not have this experience.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 13 April 2023

The Chair informed members that Item 3.2 is now complete as it was approved by Chairs Action on 26 April 2023.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

4. Graduate researcher development

The Chair reminded members that, as per 'Guidelines on Quality Assurance of Graduate Training Elements (GTEs)', the module coordinator must submit the proposed module descriptor to the Chair of their Faculty Research Committee (FRC) for approval by the committee before it is communicated to their Faculty Teaching Committee (FTC) for consideration.

4.1 GTE New Module – (CM603) Communication Research Methods

Not Approved

4.2 GTE New Module – (CM604) Interdisciplinary Digital Research Methods

Not Approved

- 4.3 GTE New Module – (CM605) Ethics in Digital Research Design
Not Approved
- 4.4 GTE New Module – (HR600) Writing Academic Publications
Not Approved
- 4.5 GTE New Module – (LC604) Navigating the Academic Publishing Landscape
Not Approved
- 4.6 GTE New Module – (TP603) Philosophical Texts: A Reading Group Seminar
Not Approved

5. **Conducting a viva voce online or using videoconferencing facilities**

5.1 Updates to *Conducting a viva voce online or using videoconferencing facilities*

The Chair informed members that the document outlining the procedures for conducting a viva voce online or using videoconferencing facilities has been updated to include an addendum that describes the three different formats of examination, the circumstances within which each is permitted and the approval process for each format, and sets out the additional responsibilities of the Independent Chairperson, the Candidate, the External Examiner, the Internal Examiner, the Principal Supervisor and the Head of School in respect of the three different formats.

Noted

5.2 Drupal Form – Requests to conduct viva voce fully online

Ms Lisa Buckley informed members that the Drupal Form was developed to allow the Independent Chairperson to provide the necessary information to GRSB so that it can consider requests to conduct a viva voce fully online.

The following changes will be made to the Drupal Form:

- i. Include an additional option under “If the Candidate is residing abroad, please indicate the status of the remote supervision agreement (PGR13)” for instances where a PGR13 is not required.

- ii. Include a section to allow the Independent Chairperson to indicate a tentative date for the viva voce so that Registry can determine if the request can be considered by GRSB or if it must be approved under Chairs Action.

Noted

5.3 Updated PGR6 Form

Ms Lisa Buckley informed members that Section E.1 of the PGR6 Form has been updated to allow the Independent Chairperson to indicate the format of oral examination. The Chair explained that the intention is to report this data on the format of oral examinations to GRSB on an annual basis to ensure that *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* and the associated administrative and approval processes are effective and efficient.

Noted

Ms Buckley informed members that Section B3 of the PGR6 Form has been updated to include the following prompts to ensure the examiners provide sufficient information in the report following the viva voce:

- a) Please indicate if the candidate demonstrated that the thesis presented is their own work.
- b) Please indicate if the candidate demonstrated that they had an adequate understanding of the research topic and of the broader field of knowledge to which the research belongs.
- c) Please outline why the research, provides or fails to provide, a satisfactory basis to meet the award level that the thesis was submitted for.

Decision Deferred – It was noted that further discussion is required regarding the reason for this proposed change and the exact wording of the prompts to be included in Section B3 of the PGR6 Form.

The Chair informed members that *Procedures for conducting a viva voce online or using videoconferencing facilities*, the Drupal Form for requests to conduct a viva voce fully online and the revised PGR6 Form will apply from September 2023 onwards and that the changes will be communicated to students, supervisors and Independent Chairpersons by the Chair. It was noted that current practices will continue for the remainder of the 2022/23 academic year.

6. Report to GRSB on Trial of Alternative Process for Extension to the Maximum Registration Period

Ms Lisa Buckley informed members that Registry trialled an alternative process during the 2022/23 academic year with respect to students in examination who also reached their maximum registration period and were required to register in the next academic year to complete their corrections. Ms Buckley explained that a PGR14 Form was no longer requested in these instances as these students were identified using the PGR6 Form and the details reported to GRSB for consideration.

The following changes to the alternative process will be made for the 2023/24 academic year:

- i. The alternative process will only apply to students who have not yet been granted an extension to their maximum registration period by GRSB.
- ii. Necessary contextual information regarding individual students who require an extension to their maximum period of registration will be provided to GRSB so it can identify what students are required to submit a PGR14 Form.
- iii. Registry will provide the list of students who require an extension to their maximum period of registration to GRSB for consideration at its August meeting, which will allow a decision to be made so that students can commence the online registration process or submit a PGR14 Form for the next academic year as necessary.

Noted

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES**7. Applications for transfer to the PhD Register or confirmation on the PhD Register (PGR3)**

- 7.1 GRSB2023/A4/7.1, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Decision Deferred – It was noted that Section Bii should be amended to reflect that it is a joint report from the Principal Supervisor and the Internal Examiner. The revised PGR3 must be submitted to GRSB.
- 7.2 GRSB2023/A4/7.2, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved
- 7.3 GRSB2023/A4/7.3, School of Computing
Approved
- 7.4 GRSB2023/A4/7.4, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 7.5 GRSB2023/A4/7.5, School of Health and Human Performance
Approved
- 7.6 GRSB2023/A4/7.6, School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education
Approved
- 7.7 GRSB2023/A4/7.7, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved
- 7.8 GRSB2023/A4/7.8, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Decision Deferred – It was noted that (i) Section Bii should be amended to reflect that it is a joint report from the Principal Supervisor and the Internal Examiner, and (ii) any input of the Independent Panel Member should be removed. The revised PGR3 must be submitted to GRSB.
- 7.9 GRSB2023/A4/7.9, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved

7.10 GRSB2023/A4/7.10, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved

8. Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)

8.1 GRSB2023/A4/8.1, MA, School of Arts Education and Movement
Approved

8.2 GRSB2023/A4/8.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved

8.3 GRSB2023/A4/8.3, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved – It was noted that a new Independent Panel Member must be appointed via the R103 process.

8.4 GRSB2023/A4/8.4, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved

8.5 GRSB2023/A4/8.5, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved

8.6 GRSB2023/A4/8.6, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved – It was noted that the Internal Examiner should undertake the necessary examiner training provided by the Graduate Studies Office.

8.7 GRSB2023/A4/8.7, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved

8.8 GRSB2023/A4/8.8, PhD, School of Computing
Not Approved – It was noted that there is a potential conflict of interest between the Joint Principal Supervisor and the External Examiner due to the recent change in their affiliations. The PGR4 should be resubmitted to GRSB for consideration.

8.9 GRSB2023/A4/8.9, MA, DkIT School of Business and Humanities
Approved

- 8.10 GRSB2023/A4/8.10, PhD, DkIT, School of Engineering
Approved
- 8.11 GRSB2023/A4/8.11, PhD, DkIT, School of Health and Science
Approved
- 8.12 GRSB2023/A4/8.12, PhD, DkIT, School of Health and Science
Approved
- 8.13 GRSB2023/A4/8.13, MA, DkIT, School of Health and Science
Approved
- 8.14 GRSB2023/A4/8.14, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 8.15 GRSB2023/A4/8.15, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 8.16 GRSB2023/A4/8.16, PhD, School of Inclusive and Special Education
Approved
- 8.17 GRSB2023/A4/8.17, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved
- 8.18 GRSB2023/A4/8.18, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved
- 8.19 GRSB2023/A4/8.19, MSc, School of Physical Sciences
Approved
- 8.20 GRSB2023/A4/8.20, PhD, School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies
Approved
- 8.21 GRSB2023/A4/8.21, PhD, School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies
Noted – Approved by Chairs Actions on 17 April 2023.
- 8.22 GRSB2023/A4/8.22, PhD, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved

9. Notice of intention to reside/carry out research abroad (PGR13)

- 9.1 GRSB2023/A4/9.1, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Not Approved – It was noted that the PGR13 for this student must cover the period February 2022 to September 2023 and that the communication schedule should be updated to indicate whether any in-person supervision was provided from February 2022 to February 2023. It was further noted that a PGR4 Form is required if the student intends to submit their thesis according to the indicated timeline.

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

- 10.1 GRSB2023/A4/10.1, PhD, School of Arts Education and Movement
Approved
- 10.2 GRSB2023/A4/10.2, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved – It was noted that this will be the final extension granted to the student.
- 10.3 GRSB2023/A4/10.3, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 10.4 GRSB2023/A4/10.4, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 10.5 GRSB2023/A4/10.5, PhD, DCU Business School
Decision Deferred – It was noted that details need to be provided regarding the anticipated submission timeframe. The revised PGR14 must be submitted to GRSB.
- 10.6 GRSB2023/A4/10.6, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 10.7 GRSB2023/A4/10.7, PhD, DCU Business School
Approved
- 10.8 GRSB2023/A4/10.8, PhD, School of Communications
Approved

- 10.9 GRSB2023/A4/10.9, PhD, DkIT, School of Business and Humanities
Approved
- 10.10 GRSB2023/A4/10.10, PhD, DkIT, School of Engineering
Approved
- 10.11 GRSB2023/A4/10.11, PhD, DkIT, School of Engineering
Approved
- 10.12 GRSB2023/A4/10.12, PhD, DkIT, School of Engineering
Approved
- 10.13 GRSB2023/A4/10.13, MSc, DkIT, School of Health and Science
Approved
- 10.14 GRSB2023/A4/10.14, PhD, DkIT, School of Business and Humanities
Approved
- 10.15 GRSB2023/A4/10.15, PhD, DkIT, School of Engineering
Approved
- 10.16 GRSB2023/A4/10.16, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved
- 10.17 GRSB2023/A4/10.17, PhD, School of Human Development
Approved
- 10.18 GRSB2023/A4/10.18, PhD, School of Human Development
Approved
- 10.19 GRSB2023/A4/10.19, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Decision Deferred – It was noted that details need to be provided regarding the anticipated submission timeframe. The revised PGR14 must be submitted to GRSB.
- 10.20 GRSB2023/A4/10.20, PhD, School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education
Approved

- 10.21 GRSB2023/A4/10.21, DPsych, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health
Approved
- 10.22 GRSB2023/A4/10.22, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved – It was noted that relevant supporting documentation was provided to the Chair.
- 10.23 GRSB2023/A4/10.23, PhD, School of Psychology
Approved
- 10.24 GRSB2023/A4/10.24, PhD, School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies
Approved

11. Any other business

- 11.1 Proposed Change to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (2023/24)*

The Chair informed members that, due to a proposed change to *Marks and Standards*, an additional change to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* for the 2023/24 academic year is required.

This proposed change involves replacing “leave of absence” with “suspension of one’s study” in Section 5.2.5 of *Marks and Standards*. The Chair informed members that suspension of study will be included in *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* amongst the types of changes to registration.

The following changes to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* were **approved**:

- i. Change title of Section 6 to “Changes to Registration”.
- ii. Create four subsections in Section 6: 6.3. Deferral, 6.4. Suspension of Study, 6.5. Withdrawal and 6.6. Readmission.
- iii. Move 6.7 to 6.2 and include the underlined text: Students who suspend their study may continue to receive their stipend if such is available, dependent on circumstances.

The following changes to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* were considered by GRSB:

- i. 6.3.1: Deletion of the strikethrough text and inclusion of the underlined text:

~~In some circumstances, for example in the case of illness, or financial or family circumstances, it is possible to apply for a formal temporary cessation of registration until the difficulties have been resolved~~ There may be situations where a Student is required to defer their studies, such as changes in family or personal circumstances, work commitments, or short term illness. ~~Deferrals should normally be~~ are granted in keeping with *DCU Marks and Standards*.

Approved subject to the following change being made:

- a) Deletion of the strikethrough text:

~~There may be situations where a Student is required to defer their studies, such as changes in family or personal circumstances, work commitments, or short term illness.~~ Deferrals are granted in keeping with *DCU Marks and Standards*.

- ii. 6.4: Inclusion of the underlined text:

6.4.1. There may be situations where a Student is required to suspend their studies, including, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, carer's leave or long term health difficulties. Suspension of studies are granted in keeping with *DCU Marks & Standards*, and only in such exceptional circumstances. Suspension of study must be approved by the Supervisor and the relevant Head of School and will usually be for a half, or full academic year.

6.4.2. Students wishing to suspend their study must notify the Registry, in advance, in writing by submitting an Application for Suspension of Study. Retrospective suspensions are not allowed, except in exceptional cases where a student was adversely affected by illness or other factors, which they were unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge, and is limited to half year.

6.4.3. During any temporary cessation of registration, the student's participation in the research programme is suspended and the student will not be entitled to supervision or to use the University facilities, including the Library.

6.4.4. Consistent with DCU Marks and Standards, the maximum period of registration is extended.

6.4.5. Tuition fees are adjusted to account for the suspended period.

Approved subject to the following change being made:

b) Deletion of the strikethrough text:

6.4.1. There may be situations where a Student is required to suspend their studies, ~~including, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, carer's leave or long term health difficulties.~~ Suspension of studies are granted in keeping with *DCU Marks & Standards*, and only in ~~such~~ exceptional circumstances.

It was noted that the circumstances in which a deferral, suspension of study or withdrawal may be granted will be set out in a guidance document, which will be submitted to GRSB for consideration at its meeting in August, and will be aligned with those relating to undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

11.2 Change to Location of GRSB Meeting

It was noted that the meeting of GRSB on 1 June 2023 will be held on the Glasnevin Campus rather than the St. Patrick's Campus. The Chair informed the Board that this is to accommodate those members who are due to meet with the Peer Review Group for the Quality Review of the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs on the same date.

11.3 Update to PGR2 (Annual Progress Report)

Ms Lisa Buckley informed members that the Annual Progress Report is now available on Loop and that Registry will communicate this to supervisors and students in the coming days.

27 April 2023

GRSB2023/A4

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting

Thursday, 1 June 2023

10.00 a.m.

A204, Glasnevin Campus