

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday, 18 January 2024

10:00 am – 12:30pm

A204, Glasnevin Campus

Present: Dr Conor Brennan, Ms Lisa Buckley, Ms Isabelle Caulfield, Ms Karen Keating, Dr Gillian Lake, Dr David Mc Carthy (Secretary), Prof. Sharon O'Brien, Dr Niamh O'Sullivan, Prof. Joseph Stokes (Chair) and Dr Lisa Van der Werff.

Apologies: Prof. Edel Conway, Dr Maura Coulter, Prof. Timo Gans, Dr Tim McCormac and Ms Nicola O'Reilly.

In Attendance: Ms Fiona Brennan and Prof. Theo Lynn.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 30 November 2023

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

3. Matters arising from the minutes

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

	<i>Item no. from 30 November 2023</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Details of decision/actions</i>	<i>Status</i>
3.1	6.9	PGR3, School of Policy and Practice	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 may be considered by Chairs Action.	Ongoing Awaiting response from Principal Supervisor.
3.2	3.1 (Original Ref. Item 11.1, 17 August 2023)	PGR13, School of Psychology	Decision Deferred. It was noted that the Board expressed its concern about the candidate's registration as a full-time student given the "consultancy commitments that require her to continue to be based in Berlin". The Board also recommends that the candidate arrange for a local supervisor when residing abroad. The PGR13 must be submitted to GRSB for consideration.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 18 January 2024, Item 8.3.

The Chair updated Item 3.1, requiring that the revised PGR13 must be submitted to Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) for consideration.

SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES**4. Graduate researcher development****4.1 Graduate Skills Sessions, January-February 2024**

The Graduate Studies Office provided a list of the Graduate Skills Sessions that will be delivered from January to February 2024. The Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research to promote these sessions in their respective faculties.

Noted

5. GTE Modules/Doctoral Pathways Approval Process

The Chair set out the context for updating the process for the development, approval and review of Graduate Training Element (GTE) Modules and Structured Doctoral Pathways, which were previously approved and noted by GRSB, respectively.

The Chair called particular attention to the submission deadlines for GTE Modules and Structured Doctoral Pathways. The typical schedule for submissions is indicated in the guidelines but the deadlines for committees published by the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (OVPA) take priority and should be strictly adhered to.

The Chair explained that the reason for amending the guidelines is twofold: (1) to improve GTE module submissions by providing guidance on how to complete the descriptors and to provide the rationale for changes to Structured Doctoral Pathways to the relevant Faculty Research Committee and to GRSB; and (2) to update the process related to Structured Doctoral Pathways to ensure compliance with the accessibility legislation that DCU is subject to. It was noted that it is no longer permitted to publish Structured Doctoral Pathways as PDF documents and these must instead be published as accessible webpages on the relevant faculty websites for the 2024/25 academic year onward.

The Chair called particular attention to the review process for GTE Modules and Structured Doctoral Pathways, which requires GRSB to decide on the schedule of review for Structured Doctoral Pathways, while the relevant Faculty Research Committee will be responsible for coordinating the review of the pathway and the associated GTE Modules. It was noted that implementation of the review process, in particular the cycle for review, will be discussed by GRSB at the commencement of the 2024/25 academic year when the new guidelines relating to GTE Modules and Structured Doctoral Pathways have been fully implemented.

The Secretary is to share 'Guidelines for the Development, Approval and Review of Graduate Training Element (GTE) Modules and Structured Doctoral Pathways' with the Associate Deans for Research, who were asked to provide feedback on the process and guidelines following consultation with the relevant staff in their respective faculties. The revised document will be considered at the March meeting of GRSB, so that the process can be implemented for GTE Modules and Structured Doctoral Pathways for the 2024/25 academic year.

SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES**6. Applications for transfer to the PhD Register or confirmation on the PhD Register (PGR3)**

6.1 GRSB2024/A1/6.1, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved

6.2 GRSB2024/A1/6.2, DCU Business School
Approved

6.3 GRSB2024/A1/6.3, School of Communications
Approved

6.4 GRSB2024/A1/6.4, School of Computing
Approved

6.5 GRSB2024/A1/6.5, School of Computing
Approved

6.6 GRSB2024/A1/6.6, School of English
Approved

6.7 GRSB2024/A1/6.7, School of English
Approved

6.8 GRSB2024/A1/6.8, School of Mathematical Sciences
Approved

6.9 GRSB2024/A1/6.9, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music
Approved

7. Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)

7.1 GRSB2024/A1/7.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved – It was noted that the Independent Chairperson should complete the necessary training for chairing a viva voce examination.

7.2 GRSB2024/A1/7.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Approved

- 7.3 GRSB2024/A1/7.3, MSc, School of Computing
Approved – It was noted that the Internal Examiner should undertake the necessary examiner training provided by the Graduate Studies Office.
- 7.4 GRSB2024/A1/7.4, EdD, DCU Institute of Education
Approved – It was noted that the Independent Chairperson should complete the necessary training for chairing a viva voce examination.
- 7.5 GRSB2024/A1/7.5, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved
- 7.6 GRSB2024/A1/7.6, PhD, School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies
Approved – It was noted that the Internal Examiner should undertake the necessary examiner training provided by the Graduate Studies Office.
- 7.7 GRSB2024/A1/7.7, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Noted – Approved by Chairs Action on 18 December 2023.
- 7.8 GRSB2024/A1/7.8, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Noted – Approved by Chairs Action on 18 December 2023.
- 7.9 GRSB2024/A1/7.9, PhD, DkIT School of Informatic and Creative Arts
Noted – Approved by Chairs Action on 19 December 2023.
- 8. Notice of Intention to Reside/Carry out Research Abroad (PGR13)**
- 8.1 GRSB2024/A1/8.1, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Decision Deferred – It was noted that further information is required in Section A and the Agreement regarding the candidate’s position in Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) and how this informs their rationale for residing abroad. Clarification is also required regarding how the candidate will be supported by their local supervisor, in particular, what is the reason for choosing a local supervisor not affiliated with PNU, access to training/resources and what will the frequency of communication be between the candidate and their local supervisor. The revised PGR13 must be submitted to GRSB.
- 8.2 GRSB2024/A1/8.2, School of Computing
Noted

8.3 GRSB2024/A1/8.3, School of Psychology
Approved

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

9.1 GRSB2024/A1/9.1, MEng, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved

10. Any other business

10.1 Minimum Registration Period for Master's Degree by Research

On behalf of DCU Business School, a Memo presented by Prof. Theo Lynn and Dr Lisa Van der Werff requested that GRSB consider a waiving of the minimum registration period for a particular cohort of Research Master's (Part-time) students who are due to commence their studies in the 2024/25 academic year.

The Chair explained that, based on a report provided by Graduate Studies Office on European, National and DCU information and data, this request relates to Academic Regulation 5.2 (AR 5.2), which states that the minimum registration period for part-time students on a Research Master's programme is three years. The Chair also informed members of how this minimum registration period compares with that of other universities in Ireland and with the European higher education sector more generally, to which the discussion centred around.

Based on this discussion and the fact that these students, while on a two-year scholarship, would begin their studies during the grace period and may be in a position to submit earlier than the regulations require based on adequate performance, it was agreed by GRSB that this request should not result in a change to AR 5.2. It was noted that, as per Academic Regulation 5.3, requests for these students to submit their theses before the minimum registration period will be considered through the standard process for notifying GRSB of a student's intention to submit their thesis for examination. When submitting the PGR4 Forms for these specific students, the Principal Supervisors can make the case for why early submission should be permitted, with the support of the Independent Panel Member and Head of School, which will be duly considered by GRSB.

10.2 Request to Host Fully Online Examination

GRSB2024/A1/10.2, School of Law & Government

Approved – It was noted that a PGR13 for this candidate must be submitted to the next meeting of GRSB on 15 February 2024.

10.3 Updates to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*

The Chair asked members of GRSB to communicate any proposed changes to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* for the 2024/25 academic year to the Secretary so they can be considered at the next meeting of GRSB on 15 February 2024.

10.4 Prof. Sharon O'Brien thanked the Chair for his service to GRSB throughout his tenure as the Dean of Graduate Studies and acknowledged the diligence and consideration shown by Prof. Joseph Stokes regarding the business of the Committee; his support of and patience for the Associate Deans for Research; his leadership both within DCU and when representing the University in the sector regarding matters relating to postgraduate research studies; and, most importantly, his consistent prioritising of the perspective and needs of postgraduate research students.

The Chair thanked members of GRSB, both previous and current, for their support in helping him discharge his duties as Dean of Graduate Studies and expressed his appreciation for their continuous hard work regarding the business of the Committee. He also commented on the importance of GRSB, its associated Standing Committee for Appeals and the robustness of its decision making, associated regulations and the importance of which to DCU.

18 January 2024

GRSB2024/A1

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting

Thursday, 28 March 2024

10.00 a.m.

A204, Glasnevin Campus