

## GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES BOARD

### MINUTES

Thursday, 19 October 2023

10:00 am – 1:00 pm

A204, Glasnevin Campus

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

**Apologies:** Ms Nuala Clancy, Prof. Edel Conway, Prof. Timo Gans, Dr Tim McCormac and Dr Niamh O'Sullivan.

**In Attendance:** Ms Taylor Gonzalez

The Chair welcomed the new members of the Graduate Research Studies Board: Dr Conor Brennan, Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, and Ms Nuala Clancy, Representative of Faculty Administration Peer Group.

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### SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting of 17 August 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 17 August 2023 were **approved** subject to the following changes being made:

- GRSB2023/A6/12.14b, List of Research Students in Examination and Max registration to Register for 2023/24  
**Approved** – It was noted that the Board requires a PGR14 for Number 23, 39, 43 and ~~44~~ in the list of research students. A PGR14 is required in the case of Number 44 if the student does not submit their thesis by 31 August 2023.

- GRSB2023/A6/13.1, PhD, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health

### 3. Matters arising from the minutes

Matters arising from the meeting of 17 August 2023 were **noted** as follows:

	<i>Item no. from 17 August 2023</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Details of decision/actions</i>	<i>Status</i>
3.1	3.2 (Original Ref. Item 9.1, 27 April 2023)	PGR13, 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.	Ongoing  Incomplete form submitted to Registry by student. Returned to supervisors and awaiting submission of complete form.
3.2	10.20	PGR4, School of Computing	Decision Deferred. 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 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 may be considered by Chairs Action.	Ongoing  Awaiting response from Supervisory Panel. Student is not registered for 2023/24 academic year; PGR2 and PGR14 required.
3.3	10.67	PGR4, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music	Decision Deferred. 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	Ongoing  Awaiting response from Principal Supervisor. Student

			<p>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". An alternative External Examiner is required and the revised PGR4 may be considered by Chairs Action. It was further noted that the Internal Examiner should undertake the necessary examiner training provided by the Graduate Studies Office.</p>	<p>is currently on a full year deferral for 2022 and must have a 2024 registration in place before new PGR4 can be considered.</p>
3.4	11.1	PGR13, School of Psychology	<p>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 may be considered again by Chairs Action.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Awaiting submission of revised PGR13 by Principal Supervisor.</p>
3.5	12.14b (39)	PGR14, DCU Business School	<p>Not Approved. The Board requires a PGR14 to consider an extension to the maximum registration period for this student.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Awaiting submission of PGR14 by Principal Supervisor.</p>
3.6	12.14b (43)	PGR14, School of Law and Government	<p>Not Approved. The Board requires a PGR14 to consider an extension to the maximum registration period for this student.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Awaiting submission of PGR14 by Principal Supervisor.</p>
3.7	3.1 (Original Ref. Item 8.17, 30 March 2023)	PGR4, School of Computing	<p>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.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 19 October 2023, Item 9.8.</p>

3.8	9.4	PGR3, School of Biotechnology	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.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 19 October 2023, Item 8.1.
3.9	9.22	PGR3, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge	Decision Deferred. It was noted that the PGR3 does not indicate how the candidate has satisfied the requirements to be confirmed on the PhD Register. The PGR3 should be reviewed and revised to provide details as per the subheadings in Section B. The Board expressed its thanks for the translation provided.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 19 October 2023, Item 8.14.
3.10	9.23	PGR3, School of Health and Human Performance	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.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 25 August 2023.
3.11	9.37	PGR3, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering	Not Approved. It was noted that the oral examination took place on 17 September 2021. The Board expressed its concern about the time taken to submit the PGR3 Form following completion of the oral examination. Clarification is required regarding the date of the examination, as it precedes the date of the candidate's registration on the programme, and that the correct version of the PGR3 was used.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 19 October 2023, Item 8.18.
3.12	10.1	PGR4, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies	Decision Deferred . It was noted that this is the third nomination for the External Examiner in a four year period. As per Regulation 10.2.1, "External Examiners for research students should not be appointed more than twice in a four-year period". Justification for this	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 4 September 2023.

			nomination must be provided or an alternative External Examiner nominated. This may be considered by Chairs Action.	
3.13	10.4	PGR4, DCU Business School	Decision Deferred. It was noted that clarification is required as to whether the candidate is a DCU staff member. If so, an additional External Examiner must be nominated. This may be considered by Chairs Action.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 25 August 2023.
3.14	10.6	PGR4, School of Chemical Sciences	Decision Deferred. It was noted that full citations are required for all publications. The revised PGR4 may be considered by Chairs Action.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 4 September 2023.
3.15	10.7	PGR4, School of Chemical Sciences	Decision Deferred. It was noted that full citations are required for all publications. The revised PGR4 may be considered by Chairs Action.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 25 August 2023.
3.16	10.29	PGR4, School of Science and Health, DkIT	Decision Deferred. It was noted that there is an outstanding reciprocal arrangement query regarding the nominated External Examiner. The Secretary will follow-up with the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board in DkIT.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 22 September 2023.
3.17	10.35	PGR4, School of Science and Health, DkIT	Decision Deferred. It was noted that there is an outstanding reciprocal arrangement query regarding the nominated External Examiner. The Secretary will follow-up with the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board in DkIT.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 22 September 2023.
3.18	10.46	PGR4, School of Human Development	Decision Deferred. It was noted that this is the third nomination for the External Examiner in a four year period. As per Regulation 10.2.1, "External Examiners for research	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 22 September 2023.

			students should not be appointed more than twice in a four-year period". Justification for this nomination must be provided or an alternative External Examiner nominated. This may be considered by Chairs Action. It was further noted that the Independent Chairperson should complete the necessary training for chairing a viva voce examination.	
3.19	10.53	PGR4, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering	Decision Deferred. It was noted 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". It was further noted that there is a potential conflict of interest as the External Examiner and Secondary Supervisor have co-authored a publication. An alternative External Examiner must be nominated and the revised PGR4 may be considered by Chairs Action. It was further noted that full citations are required for all publications.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 5 September 2023.
3.20	10.58	PGR4, School of Physical Sciences	Decision Deferred. It was noted 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. This may be considered by Chairs Action.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 25 August 2023.

3.21	10.59	PGR4, School of Physical Sciences	Decision Deferred – It was noted that clarification is required that there is no conflict of interest between the External Examiner and the Principal Supervisor(s). As per Regulation 10.2.10, "It is imperative, for quality assurance purposes, that the External Examiner is independent of the University, of the supervisor, of its Internal Examiners and of the candidate presenting him/herself for examination". This may be considered by Chairs Action.	Complete Approved by Chairs Action on 4 September 2023.
3.22	13.1	PGR15, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health	Decision Deferred. It was noted that confirmation must be provided that the applicant is not subject to any grievance procedures in their current institution. This should be provided by the Dean of Graduate Studies or equivalent. The revised PGR15 may be considered by Chairs Action.	Complete Included on Agenda for meeting of GRSB on 19 October 2023, Item 11.1.

The Chair provided the following updates on matters arising from the meeting of 17 August 2023:

- Item 3.1: Complete – This item was removed from matters arising. The PGR13 has now expired as the period requested to reside abroad has now passed.
- Item 3.2: Ongoing – Revised PGR4 **Not Approved** due to reciprocal arrangement issue with nominated External Examiner. PGR14 **Approved** to allow student to register for 2023/24 academic year. It was noted that a PGR2 is required.
- Item 3.3: Complete – **Approved** by Chairs Action on 18 October 2023.
- Item 3.4: Ongoing – Registry confirmed that the student is not registered for the 2023/24 academic year.
- Item 3.5: Complete – **Approved** by Chairs Action on 18 October 2023.
- Item 3.6: Complete – **Approved** by Chairs Action on 18 October 2023.

## SECTION B: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

### 4. Graduate researcher development

#### 4.1 Graduate Skills Sessions, October-November 2023

The Graduate Studies Office provided a list of the Graduate Skills Sessions that will be delivered from September to November 2023. The Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research to promote these sessions in their respective faculties.

**Noted**

### 5. Report on Activities of Graduate Research Studies Board (2022/23)

The Chair called particular attention to the procedure for approving requests to conduct a *viva voce* fully online and the changes made to PGR Forms with respect to the different formats of examination permitted by the University.

The Chair reviewed the data relating to PGR Forms and explained that the largest number of PGR Forms are considered at the August meeting of Graduate Research Studies Board to allow for correct registrations for the next academic year and the timeline for graduations. The Chair also explained that the increase in the number of PGR4 Forms is due to an increase in the number of postgraduate research students, while the increase in the number of PGR14 Forms is due to the impact of Covid restrictions during the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years.

**Noted** subject to the following changes being made:

1. "This increase can be explained by the higher number of PGR4 Forms and the doubling of PGR14 Forms considered over the five-year period" (pp. 5).
2. Include the PGR14 Forms considered at the August meeting of GRSB in the data for Student Matters.

### 6. Graduate Studies Office (GSO) Activities Report (2022/23)

The Chair called particular attention to the 17% increase in the number of postgraduate research registrations between the 2019/20 and 2022/23 academic years. The Chair informed members that DCU has a high percentage of part-time postgraduate research students when compared to other universities in the sector.



The Chair also called attention to the number of postgraduate research graduates during the 2022/23 academic year. The decrease in the number of graduates in the 2020/21 academic year due to Covid 19 restrictions has been corrected as the number of graduates is consistent across the 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years. The Chair acknowledged that the impact of Covid restrictions are still being felt as the average completion time for full-time postgraduate research students in the 2022/23 academic year, 54 months, remains significantly higher than the pre-Covid average completion time, 47 months.

The Chair discussed the number of applications by postgraduate research students for Irish Research Council funding and the approach adopted by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, which sees students submit their application at the end of their first year of study. While the Chair acknowledged that the small numbers make it difficult to identify a definite trend, Prof. Sharon O'Brien, the Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, explained that there is anecdotal evidence of a correlation between this approach and an improved success rate when compared to other discipline areas.

The Chair informed members that the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) receives €40 per student for the purpose of professional development. He explained that this limits the ability of the GSO to offer sessions outside normal business hours or to deliver sessions across multiple formats. He requested the Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) to raise the issue of non-attendance at Graduate Skills Sessions in their respective faculties, which negatively impacts the cost-benefit of delivering particular sessions. He also asked the ADRs to promote the wellbeing sessions for postgraduate research students and to engage with GSO to ensure these wellbeing sessions are aligned with students' needs.

The Chair thanked staff in the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) who supported the inaugural 'Research on Walls' event on 27 September 2023. This event provided a visual showcase of postgraduate research taking place across the University while also providing an opportunity for postgraduate research students from to come together from all five faculties, and members acknowledged this important community building aspect of the event.

The Chair asked the Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) to share 'Graduate Studies Office (GSO) Activities Report (2022/23)' with their respective Faculty Research Committees.

**Noted**

**7. DkIT Annual Report to Graduate Research Studies Board**

**Decision Deferred** – It was noted that ‘DkIT Annual Report to Graduate Research Studies Board’ will be revised by Dr Tim Mc Cormac, Head of Research, DkIT, to include updates on the implementation and monitoring of the Quality Enhancement Plan of the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.

**SECTION C: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES****8. Applications for transfer to the PhD Register or confirmation on the PhD Register (PGR3)**

8.1 GRSB2023/A7/8.1, School of Biotechnology

**Approved**

8.2 GRSB2023/A7/8.2, School of Biotechnology

**Approved**

8.3 GRSB2023/A7/8.3, DCU Business School

**Approved**

8.4 GRSB2023/A7/8.4, DCU Business School

**Approved**

8.5 GRSB2023/A7/8.5, DCU Business School

**Approved**

8.6 GRSB2023/A7/8.6, DCU Business School

**Approved**

8.7 GRSB2023/A7/8.7, School of Chemical Sciences

**Approved**

8.8 GRSB2023/A7/8.8, DkIT, School of Engineering

**Approved** – It was noted that the student has already exceeded four years registration before being confirmed on the PhD Register. It was further noted that the PGR3 Form used by DkIT is out of date and needs to be brought into alignment with the 2023/24 DCU version. Applications made using incorrect forms will not be approved by GRSB in the future.

- 8.9 GRSB2023/A7/8.9, DkIT, School of Informatics and Creative Arts  
**Approved** - It was noted that the affiliation of the Examiner is missing. It was further **noted** that the PGR3 Form used by DkIT is out of date and needs to be brought into alignment with the 2023/24 DCU version. Applications made using incorrect forms will not be approved by GRSB in the future.
- 8.10 GRSB2023/A7/8.10, School of Electronic Engineering  
**Approved**
- 8.11 GRSB2023/A7/8.11, School of Electronic Engineering  
**Approved**
- 8.12 GRSB2023/A7/8.12, School of Electronic Engineering  
**Approved**
- 8.13 GRSB2023/A7/8.13, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge  
**Approved**
- 8.14 GRSB2023/A7/8.14, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge  
**Approved**
- 8.15 GRSB2023/A7/8.15, School of History and Geography  
**Approved**
- 8.16 GRSB2023/A7/8.16, School of Law and Government  
**Approved**
- 8.17 GRSB2023/A7/8.17, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering  
**Approved**
- 8.18 GRSB2023/A7/8.18, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering  
**Approved**
- 8.19 GRSB2023/A7/8.19, School of Psychology  
**Approved**

**9. Appointment of internal and external examiners (PGR4)**

- 9.1 GRSB2023/A7/9.1, PhD, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
**Approved**
- 9.2 GRSB2023/A7/9.2, PhD, DCU Business School  
**Approved**
- 9.3 GRSB2023/A7/9.3, PhD, DCU Business School  
**Approved** - It was noted that the Internal Examiner should undertake the necessary examiner training provided by the Graduate Studies Office.
- 9.4 GRSB2023/A7/9.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences  
**Approved**
- 9.5 GRSB2023/A7/9.5, MSc, School of Chemical Sciences  
**Approved**
- 9.6 GRSB2023/A7/9.6, PhD, School of Communications  
**Approved**
- 9.7 GRSB2023/A7/9.7, PhD, School of Communications  
**Approved** – It was noted that the External Examiner has not attained principal supervision of research candidates to completion, but while not setting any precedence, has supervision experience and has experience that is particularly important to the examination of the PhD by Artefact. It was further noted that both External Examiners should attend the examination in person so as to complement the requisite experience in supervising research students to completion at the level of the award being sought, as per Academic Regulation 10.2.9.
- 9.8 GRSB2023/A7/9.8, PhD, School of Computing  
**Approved**
- 9.9 GRSB2023/A7/9.9, PhD, DkIT, School of Informatics and Creative Arts  
**Approved**
- 9.10 GRSB2023/A7/9.10, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
**Approved**

- 9.11 GRSB2023/A7/9.11, PhD, School of English  
**Decision Deferred** - It was noted that full citations are required for all publications, including the list of authors, and that the Internal Examiner should undertake the necessary examiner training provided by the Graduate Studies Office. The updated PGR4 may be considered by Chairs Action.
- 9.12 GRSB2023/A7/9.12, PhD, School of Language, Literacy and ECE  
**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 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 Registry.
- 9.13 GRSB2023/A7/9.13, PhD, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering  
**Approved**
- 9.14 GRSB2023/A7/9.14, PhD, School of Physical Sciences  
**Approved**
- 9.15 GRSB2023/A7/9.15, PhD, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music  
**Approved**
- 9.16 GRSB2023/A7/9.16, PhD, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music  
**Approved** - It was noted that the Internal Examiner should undertake the necessary examiner training provided by the Graduate Studies Office.
- 9.17 GRSB2023/A7/9.17, PhD, School of Inclusive and Special Education  
**Approved**
- 9.18 GRSB2023/A7/9.18, PhD, School of Health and Human Performance  
**Approved**
- 9.19 GRSB2023/A7/9.19, PhD, School of Language, Literacy and ECE  
**Approved**

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

- 10.1 GRSB2023/A7/10.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 11 October 2023.
- 10.2 GRSB2023/A7/10.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 11 October 2023.
- 10.3 GRSB2023/A7/10.3, PhD, DCU Business School  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 11 October 2023.
- 10.4 GRSB2023/A7/10.4, PhD, School of Computing  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 25 August 2023.
- 10.5 GRSB2023/A7/10.5, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 11 October 2023.
- 10.6 GRSB2023/A7/10.6, PhD, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 7 September 2023. It was noted that an extension has been granted until 10 January 2024.
- 10.7 GRSB2023/A7/10.7, PhD, School of Human Development  
**Approved** – It was noted that a R103 should be submitted to the relevant Faculty Research Committee due to the change in supervisory panel.
- 10.8 GRSB2023/A7/10.8, PhD, School of Language, Literacy and ECE  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 25 August 2023.
- 10.9 GRSB2023/A7/10.9, PhD, School of Law and Government  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 11 October 2023.
- 10.10 GRSB2023/A7/10.10, MSc, School of Physical Sciences  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 4 September 2023.
- 10.11 GRSB2023/A7/10.11, MA, School of Policy and Practice  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 11 October 2023.
- 10.12 GRSB2023/A7/10.12, PhD, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 11 October 2023.

- 10.13 GRSB2023/A7/10.13, PhD, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music  
**Noted** – Approved by Chairs Action on 25 August 2023.

**11. Application for Transfer/Advanced Entry to Postgraduate Research Programme (PGR15)**

- 11.1 GRSB2023/A7/11.1, PhD, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health  
**Approved** - It was noted that the student must register for the programme immediately. The student must also complete the compulsory Research Integrity Training, as per Academic Regulation 4.8, and is required to undergo the confirmation procedure, as per Academic Regulation 8.2, before being admitted to the PhD Register.

**12. Any other business**

- 12.1 PhD Support

The Chair informed members of Minister Simon Harris' announcement that stipends for PhD research students in receipt of Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland funding will increase to €22,000 per annum in January 2024, without a commensurate increase in core funding for universities to match this increase for PhD research students in receipt of a university stipend. The Chair emphasised the importance of consistent practice in the treatment of students across all Faculties and Schools within the University and is discussing the issue of PhD supports at the sectoral level via the Irish Universities Association and the National Forum for Doctoral Education.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next meeting**

Thursday, 30 November 2023

10.00 a.m.

Zoom