# Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees via the Maynooth University - Dundalk Institute of Technology Regional Graduate Academy (RGA)

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# Contents

# 1. Principles

This document describes the academic regulations applicable to research degrees of the Maynooth University (MU) and Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) joint Regional Graduate Academy (RGA), including PhD and Research Master's degrees. The regulations set out in this document apply to all students registered for academic programmes and awards under the auspices of the RGA and to the staff and researchers involved with those programmes and students. The students of the RGA are registered students of both DkIT and MU. Their primary relationship is with DkIT, which takes the main role in the delivery of the taught modules and the supervision of the research. DkIT and MU jointly oversee the programme and the academic awards are made by MU.

1.1 In this collaboration, MU is the awarding body for the degrees, as defined in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012). These regulations are designed to safeguard both the academic standards of the Institute and the University and the interests of individual students.

1.2 These regulations are guided by the Assessment and Standards of DkIT and MU; the Irish Universities Quality Board's 'Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education', 2nd edition (2009); the 'Irish Universities' PhD Graduates Skills' statement (2014), the Irish Universities' definition of a structured PhD as approved by the Irish Universities Association (2009) and the Institute's Export Control Policy. Students registered for graduate research degree programmes must also adhere to the _National Policy Statement on_ _Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland_, adopted by the Irish Universities Association and aligned with the _European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity._

1.3 These regulations are subject to change. In any given academic session, a student is subject to the regulations that are in place at the beginning of that academic session.

1.4 A Joint Academic Board (JAB) is responsible to the Academic Councils of DkIT and MU for the academic operational oversight of the provision of these doctoral research degree programmes.

# 2. Research Awards

## 2.1 Doctor of Philosophy

The doctoral degree is one of the highest academic qualifications offered by universities and is at Level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications. It is awarded, without classification, to successful candidates on the strength of a body of original work of scholarship prepared and presented in accordance with internationally-accepted academic standards.

The degree of PhD is awarded in recognition of research which has made a significant and original contribution to knowledge.

Candidates for doctoral degrees will normally be examined through external and internal examination of the submitted thesis, followed by a viva voce examination. The doctoral degree may vary in model and in format of submission. However, the same academic standards apply in all cases.

## 2.2 The Structured PhD

The structured research programmes include modules of two types: subject-specific modules and transferable skills modules.

- **Subject-specific modules** are advanced specialist courses aimed at providing discipline-specific knowledge and skills relevant to the research.
- **Generic and transferable skills modules** are aimed at enhancing a broader range of skills, to enhance the student's skills development. These include modules designed to assist the student in developing and managing their research and future careers across a broad range of employment sectors, including academia. If a transferrable skills module is not part of the departmental programme, students wishing to register for the module must have the support of their supervisory team.

Students engaged in PhD programmes must take a minimum of 30 credits of additional courses. Specific doctoral programmes may require a greater credit requirement up to a maximum of 90 credits. Students will normally complete a minimum 15 credits of subject-specific modules and 15 credits of generic and transferable skills.

The modules to be taken will be agreed by the student and their supervisory team and form part of a Personal Development Plan (PDP). This agreement will be recorded in a document called the *Initial Meeting Record*, which serves as point of reference for the duration of the research programme and for formal annual progress monitoring. The successful completion of such modules will be recorded on the student's transcript.

## 2.3 Collaboration with Enterprise

The RGA recognises the value of doctoral-level research which emerges from, or is conducted within the context of a company, healthcare setting, voluntary sector organisation, public body or other such organisation. Such collaborative research facilitates the professional development of the PhD student through the integration of academia with other sectors and contributes to the creation of new knowledge relevant to the needs of society, the economy and policy-forming bodies, through original research. The educational outcomes must, in all cases,

correspond to the intellectual challenge of a PhD, so the project must be carefully planned and negotiated to ensure that this potential exists.

Where there is an external organisation at the time of initial registration, it is the principal supervisor's responsibility, in consultation with the DkIT Research Office and Technology Transfer Offices, to ensure that an agreement between the external organisation and the Institute is put in place which covers such issues as: funding, intellectual property ownership, time which the research student will spend on campus or in the external organisation and the role of the external organisation in the supervision of the student. It is also important that the expectations of the Institute regarding research awards are made clear to the collaborating enterprise.

## 2.4 Alternative Formats for PhD Submission

As well as the monograph format, the RGA offers the opportunity for candidates to submit their research for the award of PhD in the format of published work. In the case of formats other than a monograph, the submission of a substantial accompanying document which must satisfy the appointed examiners is also required. In each case, the degree of PhD is awarded in recognition of research which has made a significant and coherent contribution to knowledge.

## 2.5 Research Master's degree

The Research Master's Degree is designed for students to develop advanced skills in carrying out independent research. The thesis demonstrates a critical application of specialist knowledge and makes a substantial contribution to existing scholarship in the area of research. All students for the Research Master's degree will normally be examined in the same manner, through examination by an external and internal examiner of the submitted thesis. Successful completion and examination of the research thesis is the basis for the award of the Research Master's. The Research Master's degrees are awarded without classification. The completed thesis will be made available online in the institutional theses archive.

In the MU DkIT Regional Graduate Academy, research master's degrees are available at times to students registered on a PhD programme as a transfer option. Research master's degrees are not offered as separate ab initio degrees in this collaboration.

The titles for Research Master's Degrees are Master of Literature (MLitt), Master of Science (MSc) and Master of Engineering Science (MEngSc).

Research Master's students are required to complete a minimum of 10 credits. Subject-specific modules must make up at least 5 credits and transferable skills modules must make up at least 5 credits.

# 3. Admission and registration

## 3.1. General Regulations

3.1.1 MU Academic Council has overall responsibility in all matters related to its graduate research degrees.

3.1.2 The MU DkIT Joint Academic Board oversees the implementation of policies and procedures relating to graduate research awards and reports as appropriate to MU Academic Council on these matters.

3.1.3 Students registered for graduate research degree programmes through the Maynooth University - Dundalk Institute of Technology Regional Graduate Academy are entitled to the same rights and privileges as all other registered students at DkIT and are subject to the same Student Code of Conduct. Students must comply with DkIT regulations governing graduate research degrees and are obliged to adhere to the Institute's Code of Good Research Practice, its Research Ethics and Integrity policies and the DKIT Code of Practice on Authorship.

3.1.4 A student may normally be registered for one degree only. Work to be submitted for an award cannot be submitted elsewhere for another academic award. Any exceptions to dual registration must be approved by the Joint Academic Board.

3.1.5 Students in this collaboration will be registered students of both DKIT and MU. Students will initially register with DKIT and then register with MU.

3.1.6 Students will be assigned to an academic Department in DKIT. In the case of interdisciplinary research, the student will be assigned to the Department which takes primary responsibility for the supervision of their research.

3.1.7 DkIT encourages collaboration in programmes of research between the Institute and other educational, industrial, commercial, professional or research institutions. Such arrangements are governed by the regulations.

3.1.8 All official communications and administrative procedures relating to graduate research applications, offers of places, registration, continued registration, annual progress reports, examination procedures and results shall be conducted through and by DkIT's Graduate Studies Office.

3.1.9 All postgraduate research students are required to attend the institute induction programme in the first year of their registration. The purpose of the induction programme is to promote awareness of applicable regulations and various aspects of research degrees including but not limited to students' responsibilities, responsibilities of supervisors, performance monitoring, research integrity, plagiarism, ethical considerations, potential intellectual property issues, procedures and supports available within the Institute. Induction programs are held in October and February every academic year.

## 3.2. Entry Requirements

3.2.1   To be eligible to enter a course of study and research for the degree of PhD in the institute, an applicant must have reached a high honours standard in their primary degree (normally an overall 2.1 honours award at bachelor's or master's level), or present other evidence that satisfies the Joint Academic Board of their suitability.

3.2.2   The admission of non-standard entrants, such as not holding a prior degree qualification cognate to the area of research being undertaken shall be strictly limited and applicable in exceptional cases only. Such applications must be fully supported, endorsed by the School in which the research will be carried out and supervised. The responsibility will be on the School and the supervisor to give clear reasons for their recommendation in such a case to satisfy the Joint Academic Board of their suitability.

3.2.3   Students holding academic qualifications from outside the State will be assessed using the NARIC guidelines and the European Framework of Qualifications.

3.2.4   Students whose first language is not English must demonstrate a recent (within 12 months) minimum proficiency in English at 6.5 (or greater if considered necessary by the Graduate Research Programme Board) on the IELTS scale or equivalent in order to ensure that there is no language barrier between research student and supervisor, which might hinder the research activity at the outset, and that the student is capable of providing written work, as and when required. Students whose first language is not English, but who have attained their primary degree through the medium of English, are not subject to the above requirement.

3.2.5   Some flexibility may be applied in admitting a research student who is close to the required proficiency (i.e. minimum IELTS 6.0 with no lower than 5.5 in any one element, or equivalent) and who will be supported in acquiring the required level in their first year of registration.   In such a case, if the normal standard of language competency is not reached during the first registration period, the student is deregistered.  Derogation is sought by the supervisory team during the admission process and is subject to approval.

## 3.3. Application and Registration Procedures

3.3.1   Candidates will normally enter a research degree either by (i) applying for an advertised position, or (ii) consulting with the relevant Department/Schools to ascertain whether the Department/School would support their application.

3.3.2   Successful candidates will be required to register with both DkIT and MU and to pay the appropriate fees before beginning their research studies.  Neither DkIT nor MU holds any responsibility for, nor are they liable for, any action or actions arising from research work undertaken before registration.

3.3.3   The RGA operates two standard registration times for research students, in September and January. Student fees are applied for the entire semester in which the first registration occurs. Research students are encouraged to avail of the standard registration times. If a standard September/January registration is not possible, in particular, where another registration is stipulated by terms and conditions of external funding, students may be permitted to register outside of standard registration times.

3.3.4   All students are required to re-register on an annual basis in September. Such registration is subject to payment of the appropriate fees and satisfactory progress certified by the supervisory panel and reviewed annually by the Graduate Research Programme Board.

3.3.5   Students who register outside of standard registration times must re-register in the following September. Deadlines for registration apply, and students who fail to re-register by the relevant deadline will be subject to a late registration penalty.

3.3.6   Students will normally be resident in Ireland.  Where a student wishes to reside outside Ireland while registered, the supervisor should seek prior approval. Supervisors should consider the rationale for residence abroad, the arrangements for supervision and access to taught modules, and arrangements for experimental or other research work.

3.3.7   A collaborative agreement is required in cases where doctoral research is to be conducted in formal collaboration with another external organisation (i.e. higher education institution, research institute, private body). A formal co-supervision arrangement is entered into in cases where the student will spend more than 1 month in an academic year in the partner institution or company. The context should be made clear at the time of the student's application so that the agreement can be drawn up with the partner institution or company prior to registration. Significant advance planning is usually required.

3.3.8   The collaborative agreement shall cover the subject of the research, a schedule of time at each institution, supervisory arrangements, material costs, and administration of funding, fees, and insurance. This agreement shall be recommended by the School Graduate Research Programme Board and by the DkIT Head of Research and Graduate Studies, and approved by the Joint Academic Board.  IP ownership shall be covered by a

separate agreement which will be developed in collaboration with theDkIT's Technology Transfer Office.

3.3.9   Advanced entry (transfer from a PhD programme in another institution) is permitted but subject to specific entry requirements being met by the prospective student and subject to the approval of the application by the Joint Academic Board. Credits earned and learning outcomes achieved as part of a graduate taught programme (as opposed to a graduate research programme)  cannot be used to gain advanced entry to the doctoral research programme. A student who is admitted via advanced entry to a programme is governed by the Academic Regulations in place at the time of their admission, including research integrity requirements.

## 3.4. Duration of Research Programmes

3.4.1   The normal duration of a PhD degree is four years of full-time study. Where a student completes the degree early, an early submission of the thesis may be approved after three years of full-time study. In exceptional circumstances, the Joint Academic Board may approve submission of the PhD in a period shorter than three years of full-time study, but not less than two years. In such cases, the student will be required to pay the full-time fee for the minimum three-year period. After three years, a student may be permitted to progress one semester at a time, so that a student who submits in three-and-a-half years is liable for three-and-a-half years of fees.

3.4.2   Students register on either a full-time or a part-time basis. For students registered on a part-time basis the normal duration of study is six years. Where a student completes the degree early, an early submission may be approved after 4.5 years of part-time study. The normal duration of a Master's degree is two years of full-time study.  The duration periods for Research degrees are as follows:

| Duration of programmes (in years) | PhD degree | | Research master | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Full time | Part time | Full time | Part time |
| Normal Duration | 4 | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Minimum duration with approval from Chair of GRPB | 3 | 4.5 | 1 | 2 |
| Minimum duration with approval from JAB | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Maximum  duration | 6 | 9 | 3 | 5 |

3.4.3   Students may be granted an extension; however, before applying for an extension, students should discuss the matter with their supervisor.

3.4.4   If the thesis is not submitted for examination within the extended time-period, students will be required to apply for a further registration extension and pay the associated fee.

3.4.5   An academic extension does not create a corresponding extension to any scholarship funding that students might be in receipt of. Students must approach the institute's Research Office directly in relation to possible extensions of their funding.

## 3.5. Changes to Registration

3.5.1    A student may transfer from full time to part time and vice versa, where this reflects a genuine change in the time devoted to the research.  A change form part time to full time, or vice versa, is subject to approval by the Joint Academic Board.  Any change from full time to part time or vice versa will be reflected in the next academic year. Where a student has a combination of full-time and part-time registration, the minimum period is calculated on the basis that one-year part time is equal to two-thirds of a year full time. Students must pay at least the equivalent of three years' full-time fees.

3.5.2    It is preferable for students to conduct their research without interruption in so far as possible. Occasionally, a student may have reason to be absent from the programme.

3.5.3    An absence for a period of less than three  months may be approved by the principal supervisor.  In this case no change to registration is required, and regular fee liability applies.

3.5.4    **T**here may be situations where a student is required to suspend their studies for a period of three months or  longer Suspensions of studies are granted only in exceptional circumstances and are subject to approval by the Joint Academic Board. Where a suspension is sought, the following regulations apply:

- Suspensions may only be obtained for a minimum of one semester and maximum one year. Should a student request a further suspension, a new request must be made. Suspension requests should normally be granted at the annual progress review.
- Suspensions should not exceed three years cumulatively over the course of the programme. Should a student request a suspension exceeding cumulatively three years, the school may ask the student to reapply to the programme.
- Students wishing to suspend their study must notify the DkIT Graduate Studies Office, 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 are limited to half a year.
- When a student is externally funded, they should discuss the situation with the Supervisor(s) in the first instance, and the sponsoring agency, through the Research Office, should be consulted if a temporary cessation of study is necessary. Students and supervisors should be aware of any possible implications which this temporary cessation may have on the funding and of any additional requirements stipulated by the funding body. Students who suspend their studies do not receive a stipend during this period, as stipends are paid only during active registration.

- During any temporary suspension 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 facilities in either DkIT or MU, including the Libraries.
- Periods of suspension are not considered as periods of registration and are not included in calculation of the minimum or maximum period of registration.

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

3.5.5 A student may permanently withdraw from their programme of study at any time. When a student withdraws from their programme, their registration is terminated and they are no longer entitled to use the facilities available to students. This includes Library access and access to supervision. A student should complete the relevant form to signal their withdrawal . Students who are considering withdrawing from their studies should seek advice from their supervisor in advance.

3.5.6 Where a student does not register or has no current registration, or a student who has withdrawn from their studies, they may apply for re-admission. Re-admission will normally be granted only in exceptional circumstances, and after consideration of the supervision capacity available. A student who is re-admitted to a programme is governed by the Academic Regulations in place at the time of their re-admission.

# 4. Supervision

Each graduate research student will have a suitably qualified supervisory panel, composed of a principal and co-supervisor, whose responsibility will be to supervise the student on a regular and frequent basis. The supervisory team will normally be comprised of DkIT academic staff. However alternative supervisory arrangements are also possible. The principal aim of the supervisory panel is to participate in formal decision-making with respect to the student's progress, and provide advice, additional support and pastoral care, and escalate, as appropriate, should problems arise. The supervisory panel should comprise at least two people and normally not more than four. The principal supervisor should be clearly identified and take overall responsibility for the supervision. The co-supervisor(s) may have different areas of expertise and each supervisor should have a defined and clear role in the work. The full supervisory panel should be established before the student's registration.

## 4.1. Arrangements for supervision

Supervision should be available to students during normal office hours. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring alternative supervisory arrangements are made available if the need arises e.g. when a supervisor is on leave of absence or where a change in research direction occurs. Regular supervisory meetings should take place with the student. As a minimum, a joint meeting involving principal and co-supervisor together with the student will be convened once per semester.

## 4.2. Selection of supervisors

4.2.1   Supervisors are expected to be appropriately qualified, sufficiently expert and interested in the research area to offer the student's proper advice.

4.2.2   A supervisor should also have previous experience of supervision of doctoral research or have equivalent expertise. Supervisors who have not previously supervised doctoral research to successful completion may supervise in a team that includes an experienced supervisor.

4.2.3   Generally, supervisors are normally permanent members of staff who hold a doctoral qualification and have relevant experience in an area cognate to the proposed area of research, usually reflected by publications relating to the general area of research being undertaken by the candidate.

4.2.4   A person who does not hold a doctoral qualification, but has relevant expertise, may act as a member of the supervisory team, provided that the principal supervisor holds such an award.

4.2.5   Contract staff qualified to PhD level and suitably experienced may undertake supervision of PhD students. However if their contracts do not cover the full term of the student's registration then a permanent member of staff, experienced in doctoral research supervision in the cognate research area, must act as the principal supervisor.

4.2.6   All first-time supervisors must complete the Institute's Doctoral Supervision Training programme during, or prior to, the first year of supervision, and all research supervisors are encouraged to attend supervisory training as part of their professional development.

4.2.7   The Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board should ensure that supervisors do not advise a greater number of graduate students than would compromise the quality of advice to any student or have a negative impact on the supervisors other duties (undergraduate, graduate, administrative) within the academic school.

## 4.3. External supervisors

In justified cases, typically in the case of research projects involving cooperation with another academic institution, an external co-supervisor can be appointed. The external co-supervisor is expected to:

- Agree the scope and frequency of involvement in the supervision with the student and the principal supervisor.
- Keep written records of supervision and to copy these to the principal supervisor.
- Discuss the progress of the student with the lead supervisor, at least annually.

Where an external co-supervisor is appointed, the internal principal supervisor is required to:

- Fulfill the roles and duties outlined in the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor.
- Ensure that the external supervisor is carrying out their responsibilities to the student and to the institute. This includes contributing to progress monitoring reports and ensuring that they are presented at the required time.
- Meet the student with the external supervisor to discuss the research project at least once a year.

The student will work under the general direction of the internal principal supervisor, whether the research has been carried out at the institute or elsewhere. Conditions of appointments must be agreed in advance. No payment will be made to the external supervisor.

## 4.4.Supervision process

a) The supervisors should be familiar with and seek to ensure that the student is familiar with the applicable institute policies.
b) Where the research is not governed by an external grant prior to enrollment, the supervisor should discuss with the student the nature of the research and the standards appropriate for the degree and negotiate an agreed research topic. A topic must be chosen which enables research embodying knowledge at a level appropriate to the degree to be completed in the specified time. The experience of the supervisor is an essential element in choosing the topic, and it is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the topic is appropriate.
c) If a supervisor plans to be on leave for a period greater than one month, the supervisor in consultation with the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board, should seek to ensure that adequate supervisory arrangements are made, and that the student is given advanced notice.
d) Where a change in research direction occurs during the PhD, the supervisor should recommend alterations to the compostion of the supervisory panel as required.

e) Where a principal supervisor leaves the Institute during the programme of study of one or more students, they may continue supervising the students in their new capacity, but not as the principal supervisor. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board to identify a new principal supervisor.

f) Where a supervisor is absent (e.g. on sabbatical leave) for part of the duration of the student's research, it will be the responsibility of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board to identify a replacement supervisor for the period in question.

g) Changes in supervisory arrangements must normally be made on the basis of agreement between the supervisor(s), the student, the proposed supervisor(s) and the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board.

h) It is the responsibility of the supervisor(s) to ensure a smooth and timely transition where a change of supervisor takes place.

## 4.5. Responsibilities of supervisors

Through the course of the research degree, the supervisor should:

a) Maintain contact through regular supervisory meetings with the student.

b) Request regular written work or results of research to date and provide constructive evaluation and feedback in a reasonable time.

c) Give guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, about the planning of the research program and presentation of a research proposal, about literature research and appropriate courses for the student to attend

d) Ensure the progress of the student is formally evaluated as applicable. Seek to ensure that the work is reported in the dissertation is the students own.

e) Bring to the student's attention perceived lack of progress and any issues without delay and encourage the student to rectify deficiencies and/or solve issues in a timely manner. If the supervisor feels obliged to recommend a student's studies be discontinued because of unsatisfactory progress, they must make this recommendation through the Institute annual progress monitoring process.

f) Encourage the publication of the results of the research were appropriate, provided that any relevant published work is coherently incorporated into the thesis.

g) Assist and advise on career path and professional opportunities.

h) Facilitate the student meeting other researchers and encourage attendance at research seminars, meetings, or conferences as appropriate.

i) Seek to ensure that the student is aware of all relevant funding opportunities open to open to them and actively encourage the student to apply

j) Complete the Annual Progress Report and participate in the formal annual progress review process.

k) Ensure that the student has either registered for the current academic year, has submitted their thesis for examination, has agreed suspension of registration or is formally withdrawn from studies.

l) Acknowledge a student's contribution in any presentation, publication or meeting which involves the student's research work.

m) Decline appointment if they expect not to be able to discharge the responsibilities of supervision in full, or withdraw if circumstances change and they are no longer able to.

n) Undertake professional development, as appropriate, in respect of supervisory skills, particularly the Institute's Research Supervisory Training programme.

o) Liaise with the external supervisor of the co-operating establishment, where relevant.

p) Advise on the methodology and form of presentation of the thesis and its subsequent examination.
q) Consult with the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board on the nomination of examiners.
r) Advise the student of the composition of the Examination Board for the viva voce examination, and that they are precluded from making direct contact with the External Examiner in advance of the examination.
s) Advise students in relevant aspects of regulations and etiquette in respect of oral examinations if relevant.
t) Attend the viva voce examination as an observer unless the student requests otherwise.
u) Advise on the correction and revision of the thesis following examination.
v) Attend Examination Board(s) and Graduate Research Examination Board meeting at which the candidate is being considered.
w) Upload the electronic copy of the final thesis (joint responsibility with student).
x) Ensure any Intellectual Property issues have been discussed with the Institute's Technology Transfer Office prior to project commencement

## 4.6. Responsibilities of research students

The responsibilities of the postgraduate research student include the following:

a) To advance the progress and complete their research study;
b) To maintain a professional relationship at all times with the supervising academic members and other institute staff;
c) To follow the plan of study and research as agreed with the supervisor, and to maintain regular contact with the supervisor;
d) To document the progress of work as agreed with the supervisor and present written or other material as requested and on time;
e) To inform the supervisor of any proposal to publish or make a presentation in connection with their work;
f) To inform the supervisor promptly of any impediment to their work;
g) To notify the supervisor of their intention to submit at least three months prior to the proposed date of submission;
h) To take the initiative in identifying problems and seeking solutions to them;
i) To comply with relevant DkIT and RGA policies and regulations;
j) to maintain regular formal contact and communication with their supervisory panel;
k) To complete the Postgraduate Research Agreement (either funded or nonfunded) issued by the Graduate Studies Office.;
l) To register on the Institute's research management system;
m) To conduct the research within the ethical standards and to the highest degree of academic and research integrity, of the discipline(s) and in accordance with the standards detailed by DkIT and any appropriate external agencies;
n) To undertake a periodic training needs analysis and maintain a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and to give permissions for registration for graduate training elements where appropriate;
o) To engage positively with opportunities for professional development; and
p) To acknowledge the supervisor's role in their research including in any presentation, publication or meeting to which the supervisor has made a contribution.

## 4.7. Difficulties in supervision

4.7.1    If difficulties arise in the supervisor/student relationship, the relevant policies of DkIT will apply.  In the first instance, a student, supervisor(s) or other panel member should seek a resolution to the issues at School level. This process will normally involve the student, supervisor(s), panel members and relevant Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board. The Chair may wish to seek advice on policy or procedure (without prejudicing any possible subsequent formal procedures) and/or consult with other colleagues on context and background.

4.7.2    The resolution to the issues will be captured in writing and circulated to the student and panel members by the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board to ensure clarity for both student and supervisor(s). If any party does not accept the resolution, or a resolution is not possible within a reasonable timeframe (3-6 weeks), consideration should be given by all parties as to how the issues fall under specific Institute policies.

## 4.8    Annual Review and Progression

4.8.1    Continued registration for a higher degree is dependent on the submission of a satisfactory annual progress report.  A student's progress is formally evaluated on an annual basis through the completion of an Annual Progress Report as made available through the Institute's Research Management System which is reviewed by the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board within an academic school and approved by the Joint Academic Board.

4.8.2    The purpose of the annual review is to:

   a)  Assess progression and grant permission to progress based on an assessment of the quality of research output to date;
   b)  Give students the opportunity to indicate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their supervisory arrangements;
   c)  Discuss and record any changes to the student's individualised programme;
   d)  Ensure that students have passed their required modules before thesis submission;
   e)  Consider applications for suspension, withdrawal, transfer to the PhD/ Master's register, and transfer to the PhD by Publication thesis submission route.

Best practice advises that schools clearly communicate appropriate milestones to PhD students in advance of annual progression meetings.

4.8.3 Evaluation of each Annual Progress Report will be carried out at School level every May/June, and will be completed by the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel.

4.8.4. The School Graduate Research Programme Board may organise a formal progress review of a student outside of the Annual Progress Report if deemed necessary.

### Substantive Review for PhD Students

4.8.5    Transfer from the initial phase of the PhD program to the latter phase takes place following the substantive review subject to the approval of the Joint Academic Board.

4.8.6 The substantive review is ordinarily conducted by the relevant school's Graduate Research Programme Board in DkIT and normally takes place by the end of year 2 for full time students and by the end of year 3 for part time students. It is also possible to delay the substantive review once for a further year and to repeat the review once.

4.8.7 Following this further year, the students should progress to the latter stages of the PhD programme, transfer to research master's degree or exit the programme.

4.8.8 Prior to the substantive review, the result code progress on PhD track is used by the GRPB at the annual review to indicate the successful progression of the student.

4.8.9 The award of the result code progress on PhD following the substantive review marks the transfer of the student to the latter phase of the PhD program and indicates that the GRPB deems that the project is of sufficient quality and scope for continuation on the PhD programme. The result code of Progress on PhD is used following all subsequent substantive reviews where the student is deemed to have progressed satisfactorily to the next year of the programme.

4.8.10 Once endorsed it is the responsibility of the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board to advise the DkIT Graduate Studies Office of those students who are being endorsed for progression to the following year of their study.

4.8.11 The substantive review is a distinct and separate exercise to the Annual Progress Review and will be conducted through the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board. The format of this review shall involve the submission by the student of a Progress Report (double-spaced and not normally more than 50 A4 pages in length), or an equivalent discipline-specific submission, to their Supervisory Panel and participation in a PhD review panel. For creative and performance practice based projects the substantive review may include a practice based element.

4.8.11 This report is then reviewed by an appropriate independent external expert in the relevant field of study. The structure of the report should be as follows:

o Review and discussion of the research work already undertaken since initial registration, together with a comprehensive list of references.

o An outline of the proposed PhD research project, set in the context of relevant research in the field, with appropriate targets and milestones, and a timescale for its completion.

o Statement by the supervisors confirming that they consider the candidate's proposed research programme is viable for the award of a PhD and that the candidate has made sufficient progress.

4.8.12 The supervisory panel must nominate an independent external examiner to the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board for consideration. This nomination must be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed examination process.

4.8.13 The independent external examiner must meet the following criteria:

• Possess a PhD or an equivalent qualification in the relevant field;

• Have recently supervised at least one PhD graduate student to completion  as the Principal  Supervisor;

- Be research active and possess the required expertise in the research area of the proposed confirmation request

4.8.14 The Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board, in consultation with the supervisory panel, convenes the PhD Review Panel, which consists of:

- Chairperson (appointed by the Graduate Research Programme Board): The role of the Chairperson is to ensure that the Institute's regulations on PhD transfer are adhered to. Normally, the Chairperson should be drawn from a pool of experienced staff with experience of postgraduate student supervision, having supervised a student to completion to the level of the award sought. They shall be unconnected with the programme of research carried out by the candidate under examination.

- The independent external examiner.

4.8.15 The PhD Review Panel is attended by the student and the supervisory panel, if requested by the student, and the examination takes the following structure:

- The student gives an oral presentation, which may include a practice based element, to the Examination Board describing the work presented in their Report;

- The Examination Panel then orally examines the student.

4.8.16 The role of the PhD Review Panel is to determine if the student's research programme is suitable for a PhD and to assess the student's capacity for completing the programme.

4.8.17 Where absolutely necessary, consideration may be given to using the Institute's videoconferencing facilities for the viva voce examination. Standard procedures for conducting a viva voce using videoconferencing must be followed.

4.8.18 Where the student has not been recommended for transfer to the PhD register by the Institute then the student can appeal the decision through the appropriate appeals process.


**Annual assessment outcomes**

4.8.19 There is a clear set of potential outcomes of the Annual Student Progression Review with associated result codes. Not all result codes can be used at every stage of the PhD.


| Result | Meaning |
|---|---|
| **Progress on PhD Track**<br><br>*Only in Year 1 or2(FT), and in Years 1,- 3 (PT)* | Adequate progress is being made for this point in the research degree (early years). |
| **Progress on PhD**<br><br>*Possible in Years 2 and later (FT) and 3 and later (PT)* | Adequate progress is being made for this point in the research degree, having completed the substantive review process. |
| **Progress with conditions** | The progress made to date is not what is expected for this stage in the degree. The student may register and continue, but a |

| | change in performance is needed. Normally, the conditions set will be revisited by the GRPB at the subsequent year's Annual Progression Review. A conidition can be that a second examination takes place with 6 months of the first with a resubmission of an updated report. |
|---|---|
| **Not Progress** | Further registration is not permitted as (a) the work produced is not of the required standard; and/or (b) the project is no longer viable. |
| **Transfer to research master's degree** | The student is permitted to complete the thesis and have it assessed as a research master's degree. |

4.8.20 In the case of a negative recommendation, the Institute will take the view that the student is unlikely to achieve the degree for which they are registered and they will not be permitted to continue as a registered graduate research student.

4.8.21 A student has the right to appeal a decision made by the Graduate Research Programme Board. The process for appealing a decision is detailed in Section 8.

# 5. Submission and assessment

## 5.1 Notice of intent to submit

5.1.1 Through the principal supervisor(s), a student must provide three months' notice to the DkIT Graduate Studies Office of their intention to submit for examination and provide a 300-word abstract of their work. The supervisor and Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board must recommend on the Notification of Intention to Submit Thesis for Examination form the name of appropriate External and Internal Examiners The Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board must nominate the Independent Chairperson. The examination panel are approved by the Joint Academic Board. In the case of practice-based research for PhD, the Examiners may need to be appointed earlier as a sequence of performance-based examinations may be required.

5.1.2 In cases of disagreement between a student and a supervisor as to the appropriateness of submitting the thesis for examination, the matter is to be referred to the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board for resolution. In exceptional circumstances, such as an allegation of research misconduct, or alleged breach of a legally binding agreement, the Institute may decide to postpone or deny the facilitation of an examination.

5.1.3 The completed thesis must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office, which will send it to the approved examiners. The student should lodge with the DkIT Graduate Studies Office an electronic version of the thesis at least three months in advance in the examination board at which the examiners' reports are considered.

5.1.4 In no circumstances should the thesis be sent to the examiners by either the supervisor or student.

## 5.2 Thesis Format

All theses submitted must conform strictly to the regulations and requirements are detailed below. All formats of doctoral theses are examined under the same conditions and through the same processes of independent examiners and a viva voce examination.

Irrespective of the format chosen for the submission of research leading to a doctoral award, the standard by which the work is evaluated remains the same.

A thesis must:

- consist of the candidate's own account of their research;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the field of study;
- include critical analysis of related work;
- in the case of a PhD thesis, constitute a significant contribution to existing academic knowledge;
- be based on work which has been conducted while the candidate has been registered as a research student at DkIT; and
- where ethical approval was required, the relevant Research Ethics Committee approval letter must be included in the thesis appendices.

## 5.3 PhD Thesis (Monograph):

5.3.1 The PhD thesis presents the research undertaken by the candidate as an integrated whole. It should include:

a) an introduction;
b) abstract;
c) critical analysis of existing research;
d) in-depth discussions of the methodological approach taken by the candidate;
e) presentation and critical analysis, of the findings of the research undertaken by the candidate; and
f) a substantive conclusion which indicates scope for further research arising out of the candidate's research.

5.3.2 The maximum word length, including bibliography and notes, is 90,000. Any appendices remain outside the word limit.

5.3.3 A variety of media may be used to support/inform research work – e.g. digital/electronic format, websites, digital submissions, websites, photographs and emerging technologies.

5.3.4 The order in which components c. to e. above are presented, and the nature of any additional written work, will vary from discipline to discipline.

5.3.5 Candidates who have pursued a PhD integrated with graduate training elements also follow this format in relation to their thesis. All candidates are encouraged to publish material in advance of presentation of the thesis, and reference should be made to any such publication in the thesis.

## 5.4 PhD by Publication:

5.4.1 Students should, ideally, indicate their intention to submit using publications at the time of their first annual review but, at the latest, at the time of indicating their intention to submit for examination.

5.4.2 The PhD thesis by publication should consist of:

- a set of published papers and/or papers accepted for publication; and

- an accompanying set of chapters no less than 10,000 words in length which sets the papers in the context of existing literature, gives a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all papers included in the thesis, argues the coherence of these publications, and justifies the methodology adopted. This overarching critical document should evaluate the contribution that the research in the submitted publications makes to the advancement of knowledge in the research area.

5.4.3 The maximum word length of the thesis, including accompanying set of chapters, selected papers, references and notes is 90,000. Any appendices remain outside the word limit.

5.4.4 Only peer-reviewed book chapters or papers (published journal papers, or papers accepted for publication) in reputable peer-reviewed outputs for the discipline(s) in question can be considered for inclusion when a thesis is submitted for examination. A minimum of three papers is required, however the number of papers may be higher and vary across disciplines, vary in length of individual papers and vary in terms of the extent of the candidate's contribution thereto.

5.4.5 Where jointly-authored publications are included in the submission, the candidate is required to submit a Declaration of Authorship form for each co-authored paper, submitted as part of the thesis for examination. The candidate should declare the extent to which the publication is their work and what their specific contributions were, and this should normally be certified by the supervisory panel and all authors concerned, but at least independently verified in all cases. This Declaration of Authorship should preface each co-authored chapter of the thesis at the examination submission stage.

5.4.6 Novel contribution should normally be apparent in at least three of the papers in which the candidate is main or key contributor. Other papers with smaller or more specific contributions can also be included in the thesis, where this makes sense in terms of its overall coherence.

# 6. Assessment

## 6.1 Assessment principles

6.1.1. Candidates for a doctoral degree will be assessed on the basis of a written thesis and a *viva voce* examination. In the case of a practice-based award for PhD, a practice-based element may be required as part of the assessment.

6.1.2. Each candidate for a higher degree by research will be examined normally by at least one Internal Examiner and at least one External Examiner. If the student is a staff member of the Institute or of Maynooth University then two external examiners will be required.

6.1.3. The *viva voce* examination, conducted in private, shall be held at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) unless prior approval has been obtained from the Joint Academic Board to hold it elsewhere. The viva voce examination may not proceed without all the examiners being present. In the event of an examiner's or candidate's unexpected absence, the examination must be postponed to another date. Where absolutely necessary, consideration may be given to using the Institute's videoconferencing facilities for the *viva voce* examination. This request must be approved by the DkIT Head of Research and Graduate Studies. Standard procedures for conducting a viva voce using videoconferencing must be followed.

6.1.4. The proceedings of the *viva voce* examination shall be supervised by an Independent Chairperson.

6.1.5. A candidate for a doctoral degree will be required to show ability to engage in original investigation or scholarship, to test ideas whether their own or those of others, and to understand the background and fundamental basis of the work undertaken.

6.1.6. In cases where a *viva voce* is being held, both External and Internal Examiners should send preliminary examination reports to the Independent Chairperson of the examination panel prior to the *viva voce* examination. Once these are all available, the Chairperson shall arrange for copies of preliminary reports from each examiner to be exchanged among all examiners in advance of the *viva voce* examination, so that they are aware of one another's views.

6.1.7. Following the viva voce the Internal and External Examiners shall furnish the Independent Chairperson with a joint written examination report on the outcome of the candidate's examination for the higher degree for which they are registered. This form should be completed on the day of the *viva voce* and be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office by the Independent Chairperson. Where disagreement exists between the external and internal examiner two separate independent reports from each examiner shall be sent to the Independent Chairperson.

## 6.2 Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees

6.2.1. Each candidate for a higher degree by research will be examined by at least one Internal Examiner and at least one External Examiner unless the candidate is a staff member of the Institute or Maynooth University (see Regulation 6.2). In the case of a thesis being presented by a full-time member of the academic staff of either institution (with the exception of candidates who commenced the role towards the end of their registration

or after submission of the thesis), the internal examiner is replaced by a second external examiner. Two external examiners may also be required in cases where there is no suitable internal examiner available or where a perceived or actual conflict of interest might apply. Where there are two external examiners, one of the external examiners must take responsibility for the role of internal examiner, as indicated by the Chair of Graduate Research Programme Board .

6.2.2.  In the case of a joint doctoral award, variations to the composition of the Examination Board are detailed in the relevant memorandum of agreement (MOA).

6.2.3.  In line with the Institute's policy and stated commitment to best practice in equality issues, the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board must ensure, in so far as possible, a mixed gender representation in the appointment of examiners to the examining team for research awards. Where necessary, gender mix may be attained for the *viva voce* examination in the appointment of the Independent Chairperson.

## Internal Examiners

6.2.4.  The regulations and guidelines informing the appointment of Internal Examiners shall be, to all intents and purposes and, in as far as is possible, the same as the regulations and guidelines for appointment of External Examiners as set out below. However, unlike the External Examiner, it will be sufficient for the Internal Examiner to have a broad rather than specific familiarity with the area of research.

6.2.5.  The Internal Examiner should normally be a member of staff of DkIT or MU, or a retired DkIT or MU academic or a senior researcher, with a formal academic qualification and/or professional qualification which is recognised within the particular discipline as forming a suitable background to allow the individual to act in the role of Internal Examiner. In the case of nominees for the role of Internal Examiner who are retired, evidence of relevant research activity within the previous four years will normally be expected.

6.2.6.  The Internal Examiner must be independent of the research, the student and the other examiner(s) and not be conflicted in any way in terms of their relationship to the supervisor[1] . The Internal Examiner may not be a member of the candidate's supervisory panel, but should be experienced in supervising research students, such as, having supervised three candidates from early stage through the confirmation/transfer stage and/or has completed all elements of professional development (course and where applicable exam shadowing where applicable) for examiners.

## External Examiners

6.2.7.  For research awards, External Examiners are appointed for specific candidates.

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[1] While it is not expected that the Internal Examiner will necessarily be completely professionally independent of the supervisor, e.g.  in terms of other current or former collaborations unrelated to the work under examination, it is expected that the Internal Examiner's relationship to the supervisor will be such that no conflicts due to personal relationships or constraints due to professional or other dependencies which could be deemed to impair the examiner's independence in reaching a decision on the examined work. Cases where the supervisor is line manager of a staff member on short term contract, or within their probationary period, would, for example, preclude their appointment as an examiner for a given student.

6.2.8. External examiners should be independent of the DkIT and MU, of its internal examiners, supervisors and of the student presenting the thesis for examination. Thus, all external examiners should normally be a permanent member of academic staff of, or recently retired from, another university or equivalent institution. In the case of nominees for the role of External Examiner who are retired, evidence of relevant research activity within the previous four years will normally be expected.

6.2.9. External Examiners for research students should not be appointed more than twice in a four-year period. Appointments may be made irrespective of External Examiners' duties with regard to taught programmes.

6.2.10. In no circumstances should the student be involved in any aspect of the selection of the External Examiner.

6.2.11. No individual external to MU or DkIT who has acted as supervisor to a student, or has been involved with the progress of the candidate's research, may act as External Examiner for the student following the submission of the thesis.

6.2.12. Reciprocal examining arrangements between the DkIT and other colleges/institutions in the same subject area should be avoided. In addition, the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board should not normally nominate more than one External Examiner for research awards from the same School or Department in the same institution within a given academic year.

6.2.13. External Examiners are submitted for approval and are valid for 12 months.

6.2.14. It is imperative, for quality assurance purposes, that the External Examiner is independent of MU and DkIT, of the supervisor, of its Internal Examiners and of the candidate presenting him/herself for examination. A Conflict of Interest form should be completed by the external examiner at the time of his/her appointment. It must be ensured that all External Examiners should:

- not have been in the employ of MU or DkIT (in any capacity) in the five years prior to appointment;
- not have been a student of MU or DkIT in the five years prior to appointment;
- not be a beneficiary of any bursary or remuneration from MU or DkIT (other than from the post of External Examiner, membership of an Accreditation Board, quality review panel or recruitment/promotions panel);
- not have advised the student on the work underpinning the preparation of their thesis;
- not have published with any of the supervisors in the previous five years;
- have no close personal relationship with the candidate, supervisor(s) or other examiner(s) such that, in the opinion of the Chair of the relevant Graduate research Programme Board that there is a risk of a conflict of interest; and
- have no professional relationship with the candidate, supervisor(s) or other examiner(s) such that, in the opinion of the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board , there is a risk of a conflict of interest.

## 6.3 Appointment and Examination Procedures

6.3.1. Following completion of the process detailed in section 5.1, the supervisor is required to submit the completed form to the DkIT Graduate Studies Office for approval.

6.3.2. Following approval the Graduate Studies Office will issue a formal written invitation to the person(s) nominated to act as External Examiner(s) and, in addition, will provide a copy of the abstract of the work to be examined.

6.3.3. The agreement of their principal or joint principal supervisors, or Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board, to submit the thesis should be obtained prior to such submission.

6.3.4. Examiners are normally expected to carry out their duties within three months of receipt of the thesis to avoid hardship to the candidate. The Graduate Studies Office and the candidate's supervisor(s) should be notified immediately if there is any difficulty in adhering to this time requirement.

6.3.5. In the case of a thesis submitted for the award of a PhD the viva voce examination will be supervised by an Independent Chairperson appointed by the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board in consultation with the candidate's supervisor. It will be the duty of the Graduate Studies Office to liaise with the Examiners and Independent Chairperson regarding arrangements for the viva voce examination. Such arrangements should be finalised as soon as possible after receipt of the thesis by the Examiners and notified in writing to the candidate. The DkIT Graduate Studies Office will also notify the examiners of the contact details of the Independent Chairperson and advise them that all further communication about the examination should go directly, and only, to the Chairperson. The candidate will be advised of the composition of the Board for the viva voce examination. However, the candidate is precluded from making any contact with the Examiners with respect to the viva voce examination.

6.3.6. The submitted thesis will be referred by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office to the Examiners, who may not accept it directly from the candidate or the supervisor.

6.3.7. Examiners are normally expected to carry out their duties within three months of receipt of the thesis.

6.3.8. Examiners' Reports and Recommendations will be referred to the next meeting of the Graduate Research Examination Board for consideration and recommendation to the MU Academic Council.

## 6.4 Regulations for Examination

6.4.1. Examiners' draft written reports on the thesis should be made available to the Independent Chairperson of the viva at least one week prior to the viva voce examination. Such draft reports can be modified by the examiners on the day of the examination in light of insight afforded by the examination.

**Examination of the Thesis**

6.4.2. Examiners should assess a doctoral thesis in the light of the following criteria:

- the thesis should contain original, independent work that is rigorous, weighty and significant;

- the thesis should represent a significant contribution to knowledge of the subject through the discovery of new facts and/or the exercise of independent critical powers;

- the thesis should demonstrate the candidate's ability to undertake further research;

- the thesis and abstract should be presented in grammatically correct English or Irish or, exceptionally, in another language, and should be readable and succinct;

- if the candidate's research is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis should indicate clearly the candidate's contribution and the extent of the collaboration; and

- in the viva voce examination, the candidate should demonstrate that the thesis presented is their own work, and that they have an adequate understanding of the research topic and of the broader field of knowledge to which the research belongs.

**Viva Voce Examination**

6.4.3.   The viva voce proceedings shall be managed by an Independent Chairperson who is appointed by the relevant Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board in consultation with the candidate's supervisor. A Chairperson should be experienced in doctoral supervision, and normally have supervised a student to completion and/or have attended formal training provided by the Institute. The Independent Chairperson is expected to steer the examination process through to a conclusion. In very exceptional cases where the examination outcome is not straightforward, the Independent Chairperson's involvement may extend to engagement with the Chair of the DkIT Graduate Research Programme Board, the Graduate Research Examination Board, or Head of Research and Graduate Studies. The Independent Chairperson does not have to be from the School in which the student is registered.

6.4.4.   Candidates must not contact their examiners and vice versa, while in examination; any communication should be to the Independent Chairperson.

6.4.5.   The viva voce examination, conducted in private, should be held at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) unless prior approval has been obtained to hold it elsewhere.

6.4.6.   External and Internal Examiners may meet in advance of a viva voce examination, if any of the examiners desires, with the Independent Chairperson of the examination being present.

6.4.7.   The viva voce examination shall be carried out jointly by the External and Internal Examiners in a private session. Audio/video recording of the viva voce examination will not be permitted.

6.4.8.   Normally a member of the candidate's supervisory panel is  not present at the viva voce examination. However, the candidate must be given the option of stating to the Independent Chairperson, not later than ten days prior to the examination, that the candidate would prefer a member of the supervisory panel to be present.

6.4.9.   The supervisor, where present, is not permitted to participate in the examination.  The supervisor should provide clarification of any matters only if and when requested by the examiners or the Independent Chairperson.

6.4.10.  The supervisor does not participate in the final decision and should leave the meeting while the deliberations leading to this decision are taking place, unless asked by the Independent Chairperson to remain.

## 6.5 Examiners' Reports and Recommendations

6.5.1.  Following the viva voce examination, the examiners should complete the form relating to the examination of the thesis. Reports should incorporate a commentary on the work presented for examination as well as detailing any corrections to be made. Where the Examiners recommend a revision and re-submission of the thesis, they should provide the candidate with a clear written statement of the changes required and should also include this with their reports.

6.5.2.  The Chairperson is responsible for sending the examination report to the DkIT Graduate Studies Office and for sending the final examination report to the Student and Principal Supervisor.

6.5.3.  Examiners should not recommend awarding the degree unless they judge the work to be worthy of publication in full or in part as a work of serious scholarship. Examiners should give clear grounds for their recommendation, particularly if it is not clear-cut and favourable, and indicate a timeframe for corrections or revisions. The final outcome of the examination process should be reported as one of the following recommendations:

|   | Recommendation of examiners. | Registration and fee implications. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Be awarded the degree without further examination or amendment. | No further registration or fee required. |
| 2 | Be awarded the research degree without further examination, subject to making the changes specified, which must be subsequently carried out to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. | No further registration or fee required. Note: If revisions take more than six months, the student must re-register and a continuation fee will apply. |
| 3 | Be awarded the research degree without further examination, subject to making specific changes to the satisfaction of both internal and external examiners. | No further fee or registration required. Note: If revisions take more than six months, the student must re register and a continuation fee will apply. |
| 4 | Not be awarded the research degree but be permitted to submit their thesis in a revised form for reexamination by the same examiners. In this case, the areas requiring major amendments will be detailed by the examiners. | The student should reregister for the duration of the period of revision. A continuation fee will apply. |
| 5 | Not be awarded the research degree at doctoral level but recommend the revised thesis is | No further registration or fee required. Note: If revisions take more than six months, the student must re-register |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | resubmitted for examination as a research Master's award. | and a continuation fee will apply. |
| 6 | Not be awarded the research degree and not be permitted to submit for reexamination for the research degree. | No further registration permitted. |

6.5.4. When the degree is not awarded but the student is permitted to resubmit the thesis in a revised form for reexamination by the same examiners category 4 above. The student must be registered for the revised thesis to be accepted for examination. Normally, the revised thesis should be submitted within 12 months following the examination.

6.5.5. When the degree is not awarded but the student is permitted to resubmit the thesis in a revised from for reexamination as a research Master's degree (category 5 above), normally, the revised thesis should be submitted within 6 months following the examination. The research Master's award shall be made by MU.

6.5.6. Where a thesis has to be corrected or revised, the revisions shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Internal Examiner and/or the External Examiner(s), as may be determined by the examination outcome.

6.5.7. As the supervisor does not participate in the examination process, they should not sign off on revised theses. Such signing off is the sole responsibility of the examiners. Supervisors can however advise the student on the suggested corrections.

6.5.8. Following incorporation of revisions, the thesis should be reviewed only to establish the extent to which the Examiners' recommendations have been met. There should be no further review of the thesis on other grounds. Examiners should approve corrections within six weeks of receiving the revised thesis.

6.5.9 Where the opinions of the examiners differ, each examiner should submit a separate written report for consideration by JAB. The reports will be considered by JAB without the requirement for submission of hard-bound copies of the thesis. The JAB may in such cases:

- Accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includesat least one external examiner)
- Accept the recommendation of the external examiner, or
- Require the appointment of an additional external examiner.

## 6.6 Remit of the Independent Chairperson

6.6.1. The Independent Chairperson's role is to manage the viva voce examination, ensuring that the candidate is treated fairly, to provide guidance on the DkIT and RGA academic regulations and practices and to communicate the outcome of the examination to the student following the viva voce examination. Where applicable, details of the corrections provided by the examiners will be communicated by the Chairperson to the Student, Principal Supervisor and the Chair of the relevant GRPB, following the *viva voce* examination. The Chairperson will make sure that all the required documentation is completed and will communicate the outcome to the appropriate parties.

6.6.2. The Chairperson should be drawn from a pool of experienced academic staff with experience of doctoral supervision and/or who have attended formal training provided by the Institute. The Chairperson shall be unconnected with the programme of research carried out by the candidate under examination.

6.6.3. The Chairperson shall not have any input into, or participate in any way in, the assessment of the candidate; the assessment of the candidate remains the sole responsibility of the examiners.

6.6.4. The Chairperson, prior to the *viva voce* examination and in consultation with the examiners, will determine the order of questions and the overall format of the examination.

6.6.5. A candidate may be asked by the Chairperson to introduce their research briefly and summarise the main findings or give a presentation on their research with the title being provided in advance.

6.6.6. The length of the *viva voce* examination may vary in accordance with different disciplinary practices and it will also depend on the examiners' requirements.

6.6.7. At the end of the *viva voce* examination, the candidate and the supervisor, if present, will be asked to leave the room while the examiners deliberate on the outcome (unless the supervisor is asked by the Chairperson to remain). They will be requested to return after the decision has been made in order to be verbally informed of it by the examiners.

6.6.8. With reference to these regulations, and in consultation with the examiners, the Chairperson will clarify the timeframes for submission of corrections, if any, and sign-off by the relevant examiner(s).

6.6.9. In cases where no award is made but a resubmission is recommended, the Chairperson informs the examiners, supervisor(s) and candidate regarding examination of a resubmitted thesis.

6.6.10. The Chairperson ensures that a corrected or revised thesis is sent to the appropriate examiner(s) for review and final sign-off.

6.6.11. The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the examination form, which includes the examiners' reports on the thesis and on the *viva voce* examination, is correctly filled out. Following validation of corrections by the relevant Examiners, the corresponding section of the examination report must be forwarded by the Independent Chairperson, to the Graduate Studies Office once the final thesis has been signed off by the Internal and/or External Examiner(s). If a resubmission, or no award, is being recommended, then a revised thesis is not expected at this time, and the forms are to be returned to Graduate Studies Office without delay, following the *viva voce.* The Chairperson is responsible for sending the final complete examination report to the Graduate Studies Office, the Student and the Principal Supervisor.

## 6.7 Procedure after Examination

6.7.1. The DkIT Graduate Studies Office will refer the examiners' reports to the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board for consideration at its next meeting. Thereafter, a consolidated report listing the names of candidates recommended for a higher degree is presented to the JAB and MU Academic Council for approval, by DkIT's Registrar's Office, and a note of cases recommended for resubmission, and the number where an award was not recommended.

6.7.2. All examination results and recommendations are subject to final approval and confirmation by MU Academic Councilor the MU examination board. Following the MU

approval, the outcome of all examination results and recommendations will be communicated to the DkIT's Registrar's Office by MU's Registry.

6.7.3. The DkIT Graduate Studies Office advises candidates of the official outcome of the examination process, including in cases where a thesis has been referred for resubmission or where no award, or an award lower than the one sought, has been recommended by the examiners.

6.7.4. Communications will be issued by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office to any unsuccessful candidates for higher degrees following the meeting of the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board.

6.7.5. A candidate cannot appeal the outcome of the examination on the basis of the examiners' judgment. A candidate does, however, have the right to appeal the outcome on the grounds of process and procedure.

6.7.6. In the event that, subsequent to an award being made, plagiarism or academic fraud related to a research award thesis is proven, MU Academic Council may rescind the approval of a research award.

## 6.8 Submission after examination

6.8.1. On completion of the examination process, two hard-bound copies of the thesis should be submitted to the DkIT Graduate Studies Office.

6.8.2. Also, on completion of the examination process, one additional copy of the final thesis shall be submitted in electronic format (e-version) to the DkIT Graduate Studies Office. It shall be subject to the regulations as to format, except where those apply specifically to physical properties of the print copies. In all other respects, the electronic copy shall contain exactly the same content as, and be an exact surrogate of, the print copy. The electronic copy shall be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office and uploaded to a secure web space by the supervisor(s). All accompanying material, e.g. appendices, or files contained on CD-ROM or DVD that is submitted with the hard-bound copy of the thesis, must also be uploaded to the secure web space.

6.8.3. The candidate will be required to sign a declaration form (e-Thesis Submission Declaration Form) confirming that the e-version of the approved thesis has been submitted to the Graduate Studies Office. The completed declaration form must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office with the two hard-bound print copies of the thesis.

**Thesis Ownership and Access**

6.8.4. Copies of the thesis submitted for examination will remain the property of DkIT. The Institute will place one final hard-bound copy and one electronic copy of the thesis in the Libraries at DkIT and MU for free consultation. The Libraries at MU and DkIT retain the right, subject to the paragraphs below, to include the summary or abstract in any list of theses published by DkIT or any publication to which DkIT may decide to contribute a list of theses.

6.8.5. Candidates are required to sign a declaration form (Thesis Access Consent form) at the time of submission of the thesis for examination, permitting access to their thesis. When, following completion of the examination process, the student is ready to submit the final hard-bound copy of the theses and questions of the confidentiality of the contents arise,

candidates may request and obtain temporary restriction of access up to a maximum of three years for sufficient cogent reasons, using the appropriate form. An application for the restriction of access must be approved and countersigned by a research student's supervisor. The time period of restriction will commence based on the time of publication by the library. This time normally commences following the conferral of the candidate's award.

6.8.6. Copyright in the thesis, ownership of the intellectual property arising in the course of its preparation, and patent rights in respect of any relevant product or process are guided by the Institute's Intellectual Property Policy, and are matters for agreement between the candidate, the supervisory panel, the Institute and other relevant higher education Institution(s)(if applicable).

6.8.7. Subject to the provisions of DkIT's Intellectual Property Policy with respect to copyright every candidate irrevocably grants to DkIT and its respective successors and assigns, a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty free, perpetual licence to reproduce, distribute, modify, store, copy, publicly perform and publicly display, with the right to sub- licence through multiple tiers of sub-licences, and the right to assign such rights in and to the thesis including, without limitation the right to use in any way whatsoever the thesis. DKIT may copy, publish, make available, distribute, license, or otherwise use the thesis in any manner worldwide via any medium including without limitation the internet, intranets, extranets, mobile phones, GSM/3G phones, WAP phones, databases, print, interactive television, digital media services, electronic media services, platforms, or any networks (including without limitation telecommunications, wireless, radio, television, cable, satellite, terrestrial networks) currently in existence or which may be developed in the future.

## 6.9 Examination of Research Master's degrees

The student's original research as presented in the thesis (or in such form appropriate to their discipline) is normally the sole means of assessment for the award of the Research Master's degree.

Students of the Research Master's degree will not normally be orally examined unless the Examination Board requests it.

# 7. Approval and ratification

## 7.1 Examination Board

7.1.1. The Institute shall constitute a Graduate Research Examination Board chaired by the DkIT Head of Research and Graduate Studies or their nominee. The membership of the Graduate Research Examination Board shall be drawn from the relevant staff across each Academic School, the DkIT Head of Research and Graduate Studies, the individual Chairs of the Graduate Research Programme Boards, a representative from the DkIT Registrar's Office, the MU Director of Graduate Research, a representative from MU Registry. Supervisors of candidates who have been examined, and Internal Examiners of same, will be invited to attend.

7.1.2. There will be two officially-scheduled meetings per calendar year of each of the Board for research degrees, one in spring and one in autumn. The exact dates will be indicated

in the Academic Calendar. The convening of a meeting of the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board for research degrees shall be notified to the relevant staff by the Chair.

7.1.3. The remit of the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board is to:

    i. Consider and approve (or otherwise where necessary) examiners' reports and their recommendations in respect of candidates presenting for Doctoral Degrees.

    ii. Note from the relevant Broadsheets the decision(s) of previous meetings of the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board in relation to any taught elements taken by students as necessary for the achievement of the award for which they are presenting and approve results for graduate training elements.

    iii. ensure that the examination process for each candidate has been carried out in accordance with these Academic Regulations;

    iv. Make recommendations to the Joint Academic Board for approval or otherwise to MU Academic Council of the examination outcomes;

    v. draw the attention of the JAB to individual comments by examiners if such comments are deemed to provide useful feedback to the Institute;

    vi. The Board will be required to specifically consider issues arising from a negative recommendation by an examiner, and recommend an appropriate course of action to the JAB and MU Academic Council for their consideration. The subsequent decision of MU Academic Council in respect of a recommendation(s) submitted by the Graduate Research Examination Board will be communicated in writing by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office to the research student concerned.

7.1.4. Examiners' reports on candidates for research degrees will be provided by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office and will be available to the Chair of the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board for consultation before the meeting. A copy of each thesis examined will be available at the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board. Details relating to graduate education modules that a student has taken, and have been considered at a DkIT Graduate Research Programme Board(s), will also be available at the meeting on the broadsheets.

7.1.5. All examination results and recommendations are subject to review by the Joint Academic Board prior to final approval and confirmation by MU Academic Council Confirmation of approved awards at the MU Academic Council will be communicated to the DkIT Registrar's Office and copied to MU Registry. However, communication will be issued by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office to any unsuccessful candidates for higher degrees in advance of consideration by MU Academic Council following the meeting of JAB.

7.1.6. All candidates for higher degrees shall be informed in writing by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office of their official position following the meeting of MU Academic Council through the DkIT Registrar's Office. Following the meeting of Academic Council, successful candidates for higher degrees shall be issued with a confirmation of the postgraduate research award by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office. This will include details of their research thesis, supervisors and any graduate training elements completed in DkIT.

## 7.2 Re-submission

7.2.1. Re-submission by an unsuccessful candidate may take place only with the approval of MU Academic Council on the recommendation of JAB and, under the conditions

proposed by, the Examiners and with the concurrence of the Graduate Research Examination Board for Research Degrees. Communication will be issued by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office to any unsuccessful candidates for higher degrees following the meeting of DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board. This will provide the student with the required time to consider the appeals process, if they feel it is applicable to them.

# 8. Appeals

8.1 Appeals can be submitted in respect of negative recommendations regarding progression, decisions not to confirm or transfer a student to the PhD register, and the outcome of an examination. Examination recommendations are approved at the relevant Graduate Research Examination Board meeting and by JAB and the opportunity to appeal follows notification of the decisions of these Boards or the notification of the negative recommendation to the candidate. In respect of a negative progression recommendation, the date of decision is taken as the date when the completed review form is submitted to Registrar's Office.

8.2 A student must make explicit the grounds upon which they are appealing the decision of the supervisory panel or the outcome of an examination.


**8.3    An appeal will only be considered on the following grounds:**

8.3.1 There was a failure to adhere to the *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees via the Maynooth University - Dundalk Institute of Technology Regional Graduate Academy (RGA)*.

8.3.2 There is an insufficiency in the regulations contained in the *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees via the Maynooth University - Dundalk Institute of Technology Regional Graduate Academy (RGA).*

8.3.3 There is evidence of extenuating circumstances that was not available to the supervisory panel or the examiners for justifiable reason and, therefore, was not considered when a decision was made relating to confirmation/transfer to the PhD register, progression or the outcome of an examination.

8.3.4 There is a case that sufficient weight was not given to documented extenuating circumstances notified prior to the decision being reached.

8.3.5 There was a material administrative error or a material irregularity in assessment procedures which have made a real and substantial difference to the result.


**8.4    An appeal cannot be made on the following basis:**

8.4.1 A disagreement with the academic judgement of the supervisory panel or examiners. Academic judgement refers to a judgement that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential.

8.4.2 An appeal cannot be made on the basis of an allegation of inadequacy in the supervision provided to the student. Complaints of this nature must be resolved according to the relevant policies and procedures.

8.4.3 That the viva voce was conducted remotely, where the student has agreed to this arrangement prior to the viva voce.

8.5    Appeals must be submitted, using the appropriate form(s) and with supporting written documentation, to the DkIT Registrar's Office.

8.6    Appeals must be submitted by the next deadline for consideration by a meeting of the Appeals Committee, following notification of approval of the relevant decision. Dates are published in the DkIT Academic Calendar, and late appeals are not considered.

8.7    DkIT will establish a joint Appeals Committee between MU and DkIT to consider appeals.

8.8    The term of the Appeals Committee is three years, but replacement members can be appointed by the Institute should that be required within this timeframe.

8.9    The Appeals Committee will be independent of the DkIT Research Examination Board and JAB.

8.10   Membership of the Appeals Committee is no fewer than 4, but can be up to 8, and includes a mix of genders and Schools and a student representative. Up to 3 members of the Appeals Committee may be drawn from a pool of academic staff with experience in research student supervision and examination.

8.11   Normally, the Appeals Committee is chaired by the Institute Registrar. Where the Institute Registrar has a conflict of interest or prior involvement in a particular case, the Appeals Committee is chaired by an independent member of DkIT academic staff

8.12   No member of the Appeals Committee can consider a case where they have a conflict of interest or prior significant involvement.

8.13   The student will be notified of the outcome of their appeal once the decision of the Appeals Committee is approved by JAB.

8.14   Decisions of the Appeals Committee are subject to approval by the JAB and are reported to the DkIT Academic Council.

8.15   Successful appeals will not result in a new academic decision as the Appeals Committee does not re-examine a student's work. In the case of an appeal being upheld, the student will be given the opportunity to resubmit their work or will have an alternative remedy applied as appropriate.

# Appendix A: Thesis Design and Layout

The language of the thesis shall normally be either English or Irish. Other languages shall require the approval of the Joint Academic Board. This approval should be sought and justified at initial registration. In all cases, where the thesis is to be published in a language other than English, agreement is always subject to the availability of a supervisory panel proficient in the language in which the thesis shall be published.

A thesis should not be excessively long. The maximum limit for a doctoral thesis is 90,000 words of text, including bibliography and notes. In the case of scientific and technological theses, the amount of text may be less. Theses submitted as part of an artefact or performance based award will be shorter but should have a minimum of 30,000 for an Artefact / Performance based Doctoral thesis. Because of this variation from subject to subject, the advice of the supervisor should be sought at an early stage in the preparation of the thesis. The approximate word length must be stated on the Notification of Intention to Submit for Examination form.

The use of external professional individuals or organisations for proof-reading or copy-editing of theses on a paid basis is not permitted.

The thesis shall:

(a) be bound within boards of sufficient rigidity to support the work when it is standing upon a shelf. The colour of the boards shall be MU XXX (Pantone Ref: 289);

(b) have the following information on the front (board) cover:

- the title of the thesis in at least 24pt (8 mm) type;

- the name of the candidate;

- the award for which the thesis is submitted;

- the year of submission, i.e. the calendar year in which the award is approved by the Examination Board;

- Where the format of the thesis includes a creative or performance piece, the assessed practice must be recorded in an appropriate digital format as a permanent record and be appended to the thesis.

The subject area must not be stated; the reference should be to, for example, 'PhD', not 'PhD in xxxx'.

(c) Have the following information on the spine (board) cover:

The same information (excluding the title of the thesis) shall be printed in the same order in at least 24 pt (8 mm) type along the spine of the cover in such a way as to be easily legible when the thesis is lying flat with its front cover uppermost. All lettering on the cover and the spine shall be gold in colour and clear of any graphic design.

(d) The thesis must contain a title page with the following information:

(i) the full title of the thesis, and subtitle, if any, the name of the candidate and their qualifications;

(ii)    the award for which the work is submitted;

(iii)   the name of the University, the supervisor(s) and of the School with which the candidate is registered;

(iv)   the name and affiliation of external supervisors (if any);

(v)    the month and year of submission (relevant to softbound thesis submission at examination stage and then updated for final hardbound thesis submission); and

(vi)   the total number of volumes and the number of the particular volume, if there is more than one volume.

(e) Declaration Page:

The thesis must have a page, bound into the thesis immediately following the title page, containing the following declaration, signed by the candidate:

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of ........................... (insert title of degree for which registered) is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____ (Candidate) ID No.: _____ Date:

OR

Dearbhaím leis seo gurb é mo shaothar féin amháin an t-ábhar seo atá á leagan

isteach agam i gcomhair measúnaithe ar an gclár staidéir le haghaidh na dámhachtana .............. (cuir isteach teideal na céime ar a bhfuil tú cláraithe), agus go bhfuil gach cúram réasúnach glactha agam a dheimhniú, ar feadh m'eolais, gur saothar bunaidh é seo nach sáraíonn aon dlí cóipchirt, agus nár baineadh as saothar aon duine eile é ach amháin agus a mhéid go luaitear agus go n-aithnítear an saothar sin laistigh de théacs mo shaothairse.

Sínithe: _____(Iarrthóir) Uimhir Aitheantais:_____Dáta:_____

(f) Thesis Formatting

(i) The content must be printed, typewritten or otherwise reproduced on goodquality (100gsm minimum) white A4-sized paper (210mm x 297mm), with a minimum font size of 11, doubly or one-and-a-half spaced, with a binding edge margin of not less than 35mm and all other margins not less than 20mm.

(ii) Double-sided printing is recommended for the body of the thesis, but the title page, abstract, declaration and pages including any figures likely to show through the paper should be single-sided.

(iii) Pages must be numbered consecutively throughout the text, including those pages incorporating photographs or diagrams which are included as whole pages, and papers submitted in the PhD by Publication format.

(iv) Where the thesis consists of more than one volume, the pagination should indicate the Arabic number of the volume as well as the page number referring to the volume. Both volumes should include the title page, declaration and table of contents. Table of contents should reference the complete work in both volumes.

(v) Page numbers should be located centrally at the bottom of the page and about 10 mm above the edge of the page.

(g) Thesis Layout including Table of Contents, Lists, Abstract, Photos/Diagrams, Footnotes

(i) It should include a table of contents listing chapters, sections, and appendices. This should be printed or typed in single spacing and include right-justified page numbers. Lists of abbreviations, tables, and figures should immediately follow the table of contents, prior to the abstract. Any abbreviations, other than those in normal use must be included in this explanatory list.

(ii) Appendices should be named alphabetically, and each appendix paginated consecutively but separately from the main text and from the others.

(iii) The thesis should include an abstract of not more than 300 words. The abstract should be printed or typed in single spacing and should indicate the author and the title of the thesis in the form of a heading.

(iv) Photographs and/or diagrams must be of high quality and appropriately indexed, each accompanied by an explanatory legend. They should also be centrally justified as much as possible and only positioned otherwise if essential to the work.

(v) Where footnotes and indented quotations are used, these may be in single spacing.