# Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DCU Awards)

| Date approved: | 20/06/2025 | Date regulations will take effect: | 01/09/2025 | Date of Next Review: | June 2026 (or before if DCU Regs change) |
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| **Approving Authority:** | DkIT Academic Council | | | | |
| **Responsibility:** | Registrar's Office, Graduate Studies Office, Schools | | | | |
| **Consultation undertaken:** | DkIT Research Sub-committee<br>DkIT Graduate Studies Research Board (GRSB)<br>DCU Graduate Studies Research Board (GRSB) | | | | |
| **Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:** | | | | | |
| **Reference(s)** | | | | | |
| **Audience:** | Public – accessible to anyone | | | | |
| **Category:** | Research and Research Training | | | | |

## 1 Version Control and Change History

| Version Control | Date Effective | Approved By | Amendment(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 21/02/2008 | Academic Council (AC:DOC:100:09:01) | • Regulations for the Degree of PhD Adopted |
| 2 | 20/06/2008 | Academic Council (AC:DOC:102:06:01) | • Regulations for Masters Awards Adopted |
| 3 | 20/06/2012 | Academic Council (AC:DOC:127:11:01) | • Regulations for the Degree of PhD and Regulations for Masters Awards merged into one document |
| 4 | 20/02/2015 | Academic Council (AC:DOC:140S:02:01) | • Complete replacement. Regulations aligned with Dublin City University's (DCU) regulations following the establishment of the DCU-DkIT Graduate School (linked provider requirements). |
| 5 | 29/05/2014 | Academic Council (AC:DOC: 142:03:01) | • Regulations updated following feedback received from Dublin City University (DCU). |
| 6 | 04/03/2016 | Academic Council (AC:DOC: 146:05:01, AC:DOC: 146:05:02) | • Supervisor advisor and independent panel member requirements and responsibilities amended. |
| 7 | 30/09/2016 | Academic Council (AC:DOC:149:16:01) | • Regulations amended to incorporate changes to formats of PhD submissions in Creative/Performance Practice and Artefacts |

| 8 | 30/06/2017 | Academic Council | • Amended to incorporate changes to formats of MA submissions in Creative/Performance Practice and Artefacts<br>• Aligned to amendments in DCU Regulations<br>• Changes to requirements for Transfer Viva Chair |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 08/12/2017 | Academic Council | • Amended to incorporate option for one-year derogation from English language requirement. |
| 10 | 19/06/2020 | Academic Council | • Alignment with DCU Regulations. |
| 11 | 09/12/2022 | Academic Council (Meeting No:184) | • Alignment with DCU Regulations. |
| 12 | 29/09/2023 | Academic Council (Meeting No:189) | • Alignment with DCU Regulations. |
| 13 | 22/11/2024 | Academic Council | • Alignment with DCU Regulations. |
| 14 | 20/06/2025 | Academic Council (AC:DOC:200:06:13) | • Alignment with DCU Regulations. |

# Contents

# 1. Purpose of Regulations

This document describes DkIT's regulations in relation to postgraduate research degree awards.

# 2 Application and Scope

The regulations set out in this document apply to all DkIT staff, learners and researchers involved with postgraduate research degrees.

# 3 Principles

4.1 Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis relate to the research degree offerings of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT / "the Institute" as a linked provider of Dublin City University (DCU / "the University") research Master's and Doctoral programmes, where DCU is the Designated Awarding Body as defined in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012). They are designed to safeguard both the academic standards of the Institute and the University and the interests of individual students.

4.2 These regulations apply to Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) awards offered by DkIT. In addition to offering doctoral awards, the Institute offers awards at Master's level on the basis of research, and these are also subject to these regulations.

4.3 These regulations are guided by the Assessment and Standards of DkIT and DCU; 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), the National Framework for Doctoral Education (2023) and the Institute' Export Control Policy (2023). 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._

4.4 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.

# 5. Doctoral Awards

The doctoral degree is one of the highest academic qualifications offered by DkIT 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. All candidates for doctoral degrees will be examined in the same manner through external and internal examination of the submitted thesis, followed by a viva voce examination. In the case of creative or performance practice-based research, the examination may involve the assessment of one or more creative elements through performance/lecture recital or other suitable format.

The PhD may vary in model and in format of submission, as outlined in section 4.16 However, the same academic standards apply in all cases.

### 5.1    Doctor of Philosophy

The degree of PhD is awarded in recognition of research by the candidate which has made a significant and coherent contribution to knowledge.  The degree of PhD is awarded, without classification, on the basis of successful completion and examination of the research thesis. The thesis has a nominal value of 270 ECTS credits.

The core component of a PhD programme is the advancement of knowledge through original research. At the same time, the PhD is designed to meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia. In that context, the PhD involves a high-quality research experience, training and output consistent with international norms and best practice.

To support the original research activity, the following elements are advised:

- a formalised integrated programme of education, training, and personal and professional development activities which is planned and often thematically focused;
- the development of discipline-specific knowledge, research skills and generic/ transferable skills; and
- declared outcomes and graduate attributes in line with national and international best practice.

The Institute is committed to providing its research students with the best possible research experience. In that context, it is very supportive of research students engaged in PhD research who wish to take additional courses to enhance their generic and disciplinary research skills. Students can take ECTS credits by means of discipline-specific modules, generic research and transferable skills, as agreed in their Personal Development Plan (PDP). Students who opt to take such modules must have the permission of their supervisors and the lecturer delivering the module in question. The successful completion of such modules will be recorded on the student's transcript. All module descriptors relating to modules not already accredited as part of an award programme are subject to prior approval by the Graduate Research Studies Board. Results of modules will be approved by the Graduate Research Examination Board (GREB).

Candidates who wish to pursue a structured PhD programme will undertake disciplinespecific modules, research skills courses, and generic and transferable skills courses, as agreed in their Personal Development Plan (PDP) and/or partnership agreement to the value of at least 20 ECTS credits, no more than 90 ECTS credits, but typically in the range 3060 ECTS credits. Normally, 10 ECTS credits will relate to research skills, transferable and generic skills modules.

**Doctor of Philosophy – Model based on Collaboration with Enterprise Model**

DkIT recognises the value of PhD-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.

The degree of PhD is awarded, without classification, on the basis of a thesis submitted for examination. The thesis has a nominal value of 270 ECTS credits.

At the time of initial registration, it is the principal supervisor's responsibility, in consultation with the Research Office and the Technology Transfer Office, 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.

Students registered under this model can only take a maximum of 30 additional ECTS credits by means of discipline-specific modules, generic research and transferable skills, and active contribution to the research community. Students who opt to take such modules must have the permission of their supervisors. The successful completion of such modules will be recorded on the student's transcript. All module descriptors relating to modules not already accredited as part of an award programme are subject to accreditation by the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board, following recommendation by the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board. Results of modules will be reviewed and approved by DkIT's Graduate Research Examination Board.

## 5.2 Formats for PhD Submission

As well as the monograph format, the Institute offers the opportunity for candidates to submit their research for the award of PhD in the format of published work, of artefacts such as music compositions, and through creative or performance practice. 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. Specific requirements for each format are given in section 14 of these regulations. See also Appendix 1 and 2 for the associated guidelines for candidates, supervisors, supervisors and examiners on the format of such PhDs.

# 6. Master's Degree by Research

The Master's degree by Research, (Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications) is awarded, without classification, on the basis of a thesis submitted for examination. It nominally has a value of 180 ECTS credits. Master's students may register for a maximum of 20 ECTS credits of discipline-specific modules, research skills courses or generic skills courses. The Master's degree can be undertaken in the context of collaboration with

enterprise. In these cases, it is the supervisor's responsibility at the time of initial registration 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 organisation and the role of the organisation in the supervision of the student.

As well as the more traditional monograph, the Institute offers the opportunity for candidates to submit their research for the award of Masters (by Research) in the format of published work, or artefacts such as music compositions, and through creative or performance practice. See section 14 and appendices 1, 2 and 3, for the associated guidelines for candidates, supervisors, and examiners on the format of such Masters.

Examination of a Masters candidate will take place through internal and external examination of the submitted thesis. A viva voce examination is not mandatory but can be requested by the examiners. In the case of practice-based research the examination may involve the assessment of one or more creative elements through performance/lecture recital.

The following awards may be made:

- LLM Master of Laws
- MA    Master of Arts
- MBS Master of Business Studies
- MEng Master of Engineering
- MEd Master of Education
- MPhil Master of Philosophy
- MSc Master of Science

## 7. General Regulations

7.1 DCU Academic Council has overall responsibility in all matters related to its graduate research degrees.

7.2 The DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board oversees the implementation of policies and procedures relating to graduate research awards and reports as appropriate to DCU Academic Council on these matters.

7.3 DkIT is prepared to consider proposals for programmes of graduate research work concerned with fundamental research or other areas of scholarship or with any aspects of industrial, commercial, enterprise, clinical, artistic or professional activity.

7.4 Students registered for graduate research degree programmes through DkIT 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 guidelines, the DKIT Code of Practice on Authorship and the Academic Integrity Policy.

7.5 A student may normally be registered at any time for one degree only, and work to be submitted for an award cannot be submitted elsewhere for a degree or other similar

award. Any exceptions for dual registration must be made to the Graduate Research Studies Board.

7.6 Each student must register with DkIT, and their registration will be assigned to a single Department, notwithstanding the fact that their may conduct the research across a number of Departments/Schools or in one or more Research Institutes, Centres and/or Groups.

7.7 In the case of interdisciplinary research projects, the School assuming responsibility for the project must be the School to which the student is assigned.

7.8 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, including those outlined in Sections 6.5 and 6.6.

7.9 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.

# 8. Qualification Requirements

8.1 Prior to submitting an application, a candidate must consult with the appropriate Department/School on the proposed programme of study and must ascertain whether or not the Department/School would be prepared to recommend their application to the Institute.

8.2 To register for a graduate research programme, a candidate must normally have obtained a primary degree classification (Level 8) equivalent to a second-class honours degree, grade two, from a University / Institute or an approved equivalent degree awarding body, or have an approved equivalent professional qualification in an area cognate to the proposed research topic. These candidates will only be considered for enrolment on the Master's Degree by Research initially.

8.3 Candidates with a taught Master's degree (Level 9) in an appropriate discipline with first- or second-class honours, and candidates with a primary degree in an appropriate discipline with first or second-class honours, grade one, may apply and be considered for entry to the PhD-track register with a view to proceeding towards a PhD. Such candidates will undergo a PhD confirmation procedure, as outlined in section 13, before being admitted to the PhD register.

8.4 Students on the Master's register may apply for transfer to the PhD register under the same conditions, and using the same procedure, as PhD-track candidates requesting confirmation on the PhD register.

8.5 Candidates holding an appropriate Master's degree obtained by research may apply for direct entry to the PhD register to conduct research in a cognate area.

8.6 In exceptional circumstances only, candidates for a Master's degree who do not meet the stipulated entry requirements but who can demonstrate exceptional ability or aptitude for academic research may apply to pursue studies for a research degree. They

may base their application on recognition of their accredited or experiential prior learning, in line with Institute policies in this regard.

8.7 The admission of candidates 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 and endorsed by the School in which the research will be carried out and supervised. The onus will be on the School and the supervisor to give clear reasons for their recommendation in such a case, and the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board will make the final decision on admission

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

8.9 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.

8.10 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.

8.11 Some flexibility applies in terms of 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 by DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board. The application should include details of planned support for the student to reach the required standard. The attainment of the required standard is reported to the Registrar's Office as part of the annual progress monitoring process.

## 9. Application and Registration Procedures

9.1 Candidates must apply to DkIT using the Institute Postgraduate Research Application Form. Only candidates who have contacted the School, with which they wish to be registered, and have got a recommendation from the School to apply, will be able to proceed to the completion of the postgraduate research application.

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

9.3 The registration dates for Winter and Summer registrations are published in the Academic Calendar.

9.4 All students are required to re-register on an annual basis. Such registration is subject to payment of the appropriate fees and satisfactory progress certified by the supervisory panel (described in regulation 13.1), through the Institute's Research Management System, and endorsed by the appropriate Graduate Research Programme Board.

9.5 In normal circumstances, research students registered at DKIT will reside within Ireland

9.6 Supervisors, on behalf of registered students, or new applicants not covered by a joint supervision agreement or joint award agreement but wishing to reside and undertake research outside Ireland or the Institute for a period of six months or more, must inform the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board and seek approval from DCU Graduate Research Studies Board and for those wishing to reside and undertake research outside Ireland for the full period of registration must receive the express written permission of the DkIT and DCU Graduate Research Studies Board, where in either case details are provided as to the rationale for registration abroad rather than locally to DkIT, and arrangements for supervisor oversight of the field, experimental or other work. Such requirements and principles are detailed in regulation 12.25.

9.7 A collaborative agreement is required in cases where doctoral or Master's 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 to DkIT so that the agreement can be drawn up by DkIT with the partner institution or company prior to registration. Significant advance planning is usually required.

9.8 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 signed by the relevant Head of School in DkIT or nominee, and by the DkIT Head of Research and Graduate Studies if part of a funded collaborative programme. IP ownership shall be covered by a separate agreement which will be developed in collaboration with the Institute's Technology Transfer Office.

9.9 Advanced entry is permitted into the Institute, but subject to specific entry requirments being met by the prospective student and subject to the approval of the application by the Graduate Research Studies Board. Credits earned and learning outcomes achieved as part of a graduate taught programme cannot be used to gain advanced entry to a graduate research programme, with exception to those seeking advance entry to Professional Doctorate programmes. 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.

# 10 Period of Time for Completion of Research Programmes

10.1 Students register on either a full-time or a part-time basis. Any changes to this will only be reflected in the next academic year.

10.2 The minimum typical and maximum registration periods for Doctoral and Research Master's degrees are as follows:

| | Minimum Registration Period | Typical Registration Period | Maximum Registration Period |
|---|---|---|---|
| PhD (full time) | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years |
| PhD (part time) | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years |
| Research Master's (full time) | 2 years | 2 years | 3 years |
| Research Master's (part time) | 3 years | 3-4 years | 3 years |

10.3  If a student wishes to submit a thesis before the minimum period stipulated, they must seek permission from the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board through the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board and the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board, to be allowed to do so. Such permission will be granted in exceptional cases only.

10.4  If a student does not submit a final approved thesis to the Graduate Studies Office within the maximum period stipulated, they must seek permission from the  DCU Graduate Research Studies Board  to  be allowed to continue their studies. Such extensions will be granted in exceptional cases only.

## 11. Changes to Registration

11.1 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 Institute. If this is for a period of less than three months no change to registration is required, and regular fee liability applies.

11.2 When a student is externally funded, he/she 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 defer do not receive a stipend during this period, as stipends are paid only during active registration. The Graduate Studies Office should be notified prior to the student seeking a deferral from the Institute.

11.3      Deferral

**11.3.1** There may be situations where a Student is required to defer their studies. Deferrals must be approved by the Supervisor and the relevant Head of School and will usually be for a half, or full academic year.

**11.3.2**  Students wishing to defer must notify the Graduate Studies Office, in advance of the deferral, in writing by submitting an Application for Deferral. Retrospective deferrals are not allowed, except in exceptional cases where a student was

adversely affected by illness or other factors, which they were unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge, and is limited to half year.

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

**11.3.4** The maximum period of registration is not extended.

**11.3.5** Tuition fees are adjusted to account for the deferred period.

11.4    Suspension of Study

**11.4.1** There may be situations where a Student is required to suspend their studies. Suspension of studies are granted only in exceptional circumstances. Suspension of study must be approved by the Supervisor and the relevant Head of School and will usually be for a half, or full academic year.

11.4.2 Students wishing to suspend their study must notify the 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 is limited to half year.

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

11.4.4 The maximum period of registration is extended.

**11.4.5** Tuition fees are adjusted to account for the suspended period.

11.5    Withdrawal

**11.5.1** Research students withdrawing from the Institute must notify the Graduate Studies Office.

11.6    Readmission

**11.6.1** Where a student does not register or has no current registration, or a student who has withdrawn from the Institute, they may apply to the Graduate Research Studies Board for re-admission to the programme. Readmission is subject to there being sufficient disciplinary expertise and supervisory capacity. Re-admissions should normally be granted only in exceptional circumstances. A student who is re-admitted to a programme is governed by the Academic Regulations in place at the time of their re-admission.

## 12. Supervision of Programmes of Research

12.1 Each graduate research student will have a supervisory panel. 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.

12.2 The supervisory panel will comprise of at least 2 supervisors which can include two principal supervisors or one principal and one secondary supervisor, plus one additional independent panel member who should be a DkIT staff member. A supervisor advisor (a mentoring supervisor) may also be appointed who could fulfil the role of the independent panel member (see regulation 12.12 below). The principal or secondary supervisor must be a staff member from the academic Department in which the student is registered.

12.3 Graduate Research Programme Boards should endeavour to ensure that a supervisory panel has no more than four members in total. Appointment of too many supervisors for one candidate is to be avoided, and each supervisor should have a defined and clear role in the work (assisting students in a laboratory for instance does not, of itself, constitute supervising).

12.4 While a Supervisor will be an expert in the field of study, there is no requirement that all members of the supervisory panel have this expertise, but they should have some experience of research degree supervision in a similar or related discipline.

12.5 The supervisory panels for the first two students of any academic new to being a principal supervisor must include a member experienced in supervision who will be in a position to take the role of the supervisor advisor[1]. Inclusion of such a panel member can be deemed necessary by the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board for reasons other than a principal supervisor's relative inexperience. These first two students associated with the principal supervisor new to supervision, are not required to have completed their programme of study but must have successfully progressed through Year 1 and 2, respectively, of their research programme of study.

12.6 The Independent Panel Member should be appointed by the Graduate Studies Office within three months of the student's initial registration and notified to the relevant Chairs of the Graduate Research Programme Boards . The principal supervisor should notify the student of the appointment and outline the functions of the role.

12.7 The full supervisory panel should be established before the student's registration and notified by the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board to the Graduate Studies Office, with the exception of the independent panel member.

12.8 Schools are required to have guidelines on the ranges of frequency and durations of contact between student and research supervisors that are regarded as reasonable in the relevant discipline.

12.9 Supervision remains the sole prerogative of the Supervisor(s) who has/have full responsibility for the overall management and supervision of the student's work and progress

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[1] This panel member must have supervised two students to completion at the level of the award being sought or at a higher level and may be a member of academic staff in another School or in DCU, or in exceptional cases, in another institution if there are not enough panel members qualified to be advisors available in a School and subject to the approval of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board

**12.10  Principal Supervisors(s)**

Each graduate research student will have at least one principal supervisor.

12.10.1 A principal supervisor should:

- have a qualification at the level of the research award (regulations 12.15 and 12.17), 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 and

- be a member of DkIT staff with a permanent contract or one which extends beyond the normal expected registration period of the candidate. If these conditions are not met, then a supervisory plan must be put in place which satisfies the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board and the Graduate Research Studies Board.

12.10.2 In certain cases, where there is a significant requirement that more than one area of expertise be covered, there may be more than one principal supervisor. The supervisors in this instance are referred to as joint principal supervisors and have equal rights and undertake equal responsibilities.

12.10.3 The responsibilities of the supervisor(s) include the following:

- Provide contact and guidance through regular and systematic meetings keeping records as appropriate; to request regular written submissions as appropriate and to provide constructive evaluation and criticism in reasonable time.

- Ensure the student is registered on the Institute's Research Management system.

- Meet with the candidate and other panel members quarterly to discuss progress.

- To meet with the student and other supervisory panel members formally at least once a year to discuss progress;

- Schedule meetings between the student and the Independent Panel Member.

- Complete the formal annual progress report using the Institute's Research Management system (dkit.smartsimple.ie) with the student (including details of the frequency of contact maintained with the candidate and an appraisal by supervisors of the progress of the work to date) and advise the Graduate Studies Office if the candidate is eligible to progress.

- 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.

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

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

- Advise the student on the selection of the research topic.

- Ensure, at time of initial registration, that an appropriate agreement (as per the regulations) is in place where the research involves an external organisation.

- Ensure that the student acquires training in the methodology of research and scholarship and in the skills necessary for sustained independent effort by advising on their training needs analysis and their Personal Development Plan (PDP), and giving permission for registration for structured training where appropriate.

- Ensure that the student is made aware of any inadequacies of progress or standards relative to the standard expected and, where necessary, to advise on withdrawal from the programme.

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

- Advise on the methodology and form of presentation of the thesis and its subsequent examination.

- Consult with the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board on the nomination of examiners.

- Advise the student of the composition of the Examination Board for the viva voce examination, and that he/she is precluded from making direct contact with the External Examiner.

- Advise students in relevant aspects of regulations and etiquette in respect of oral examinations if relevant.

- Attend the viva voce examination unless the student requests otherwise.

- Advise on the correction and revision of the thesis following examination.

- Attend Examination Board(s) and Graduate Research Examination Board meeting at which the candidate is being considered.

- Upload the electronic copy of the final thesis (joint responsibility with student).

- Ensure any Intellectual Property issues have been discussed with the Institute's Technology Transfer Office prior to project commencement

### 12.11 Secondary Supervisor(s)

12.11.1 In certain cases, a graduate research student may have secondary supervisor(s) as well as principal supervisor(s). A secondary supervisor is appointed when specific expert academic input is needed or been given on a significant aspect of the research project, or when supervision is being provided by a person who is not a member of DkIT staff (e.g. DkIT retiree, researcher external to DkIT).

12.11.2 Unless subject to a joint award agreement, where a supervisor is not a member of Institute staff, such a person or persons will be deemed to be secondary supervisors and a Institute staff member will be the principal supervisor. All relevant forms must incorporate the names of all supervisors. The Institute will, however, accept the signature of the DKIT supervisor(s) as signalling assent on the part of both or all supervisors.

12.11.3 A secondary supervisor(s) should:

- have research experience consistent with the level of the research award, (see also regulation 12.16), and

- be an active scholar in the area of research with the required specific expertise.

- be internal or external to DkIT.

## 12.12 Independent Panel Member and Supervisor Advisor

12.12.1 Each graduate research student will have one independent panel member and the supervisory panel may comprise a supervisor advisor as detailed in sections 10.5 and 10.6. The independent supervisor cannot be either the principal supervisor or secondary supervisor.

12.12.2 The supervisor advisor should:

- have experience of research degree supervision at the level of the research award in a similar or related discipline. There is no requirement to be an expert in the field of study and

- be a member of Institute staff and

- have significant experience in research degree supervision at the research award level if the principal supervisor(s) is supervising their first or second research student at the award level (or the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board deems it necessary to have a supervisor advisor (mentoring supervisor) in place for any reason) and no other supervisory panel member fulfils the supervisor advisor role.

12.12.3 The independent panel member should:

- have some experience of research degree supervision at the level of the research award.

- be a member of academic staff in the Institute but normally not in the same School as the student is registered.

12.12.4 The responsibilities of the supervisor advisor include the following:

- Provide the supervisor(s) with advice and support as needed.

- 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.

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

12.12.5 The responsibilities of the independent panel member include the following:

- Meet with the candidate formally at least once a year to discuss progress, as scheduled by the principal supervisor.

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    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.

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

    - Provide the student with advice, additional support and pastoral care.

    - Refer to the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board, as appropriate, should problems arise

12.13 Postgraduate Research Students The Reponsibilities of the student include the following:

- to comply with relevant DkIT regulations;

- to maintain regular formal contact and communication with their supervisory panel

- to complete the Postgraduate Research Agreement (either funded or nonfunded) issued by the Graduate Studies Office.

- to register on the Institute's research management system

- to conduct the research within the ethical standards of the discipline(s) and in accordance with the standards detailed by the DkIT and any appropriate external agencies;

- 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;

- to engage positively with opportunities for professional development; and

- to acknowledge the supervisor's role in their research including in any presentation, publication or meeting to which the supervisor has made a contribution.

## 12.14  Supervisory Process

12.15 Staff who undertake the supervision of PhD students are themselves required to 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.

12.16 A person who does not hold a doctoral qualification may, however, act as joint principal supervisor or secondary supervisor to a doctoral candidate provided that the other supervisor holds such an award. Such supervisors must have research experience consistent with the level of study.

12.17 Staff undertaking the supervision of research Master's students are themselves required to hold at least a Master's qualification in an area cognate to the proposed area of

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research. A person who does not hold a Master's qualification may, however, act as joint principal supervisor or secondary supervisor provided that the other supervisor holds

such an award. Such supervisors must have research experience consistent with the level of study.

12.18 Members of staff should normally act as principal supervisor to a maximum of six research students at any one time. All cases in which the figure exceeds ten should be referred to the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board (or the Registrar or nominee where the Chair is a supervisor) for a decision as to whether or not it is appropriate that the proposed supervisor accept an applicant. Where more than one School is involved in the process, the relevant Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board is the Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board of which the proposed supervisor is a member.

12.19 All first-time supervisors must complete the Institute's Doctoral SupervisionTraining 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. It will be the responsibility of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board to monitor progress and provide evidence of completion of the supervisory training for staff within their School.

12.20 It is the responsibility of the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board to ensure that appropriate supervision remains in place in situations where a supervisor leaves the Institute.

12.21 Where a principal supervisor retires or resigns from the Institute during the programme of study of one or more students, then the supervisor is encouraged to continue supervising the students in their new capacity, but as a secondary supervisor. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board to appoint a new principal supervisor and to notify the Graduate Studies Office using the Change of Supervisory Arrangements Form.

12.22 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 determine whether or not a replacement supervisor is needed for the period in question.

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

12.24 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 and must be submitted to the Graduate Research Programme Board for approval and, once approved there, notified to the Graduate Studies Office.

12.25 Where a research candidate is resident outside Ireland for six months or more over the period of registration, and the registration is not subject to a co-supervision agreement or joint award agreement with an external institution, the express permission of the DkIT and DCU Graduate Research Studies Board must be obtained. In order to reach a decision on the matter, the DkIT and DCU Graduate Research Studies Board must be informed as per regulation 9.6, and the following principles for remote supervision with respect to residing abroad should be adhered to:

12.26 An agreement which incorporates the relevant DKIT regulations is written and signed by the supervisor(s), the student, the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board and the Head of Research and Graduate Studies

12.27 The DKIT supervisor(s) must have access to any relevant data and/or detailed information on facilities / field sites being used in the candidate's research in order to facilitate evaluation of the methodologies being used and the rigour and integrity of analysis.

12.28 The DKIT supervisor(s) and student need to maintain regular contact to ensure the successful supervision of the student. At a minimum an annual face-to-face meeting with the Supervisor(s) is mandatory, and either the supervisor(s) or the student may request a face-to-face meeting if they deem it necessary. As per regulation 12.10.3 the DkIT supervisor must meet with the student and other supervisory panel members formally at least once a year to discuss progress.

12.29 A mechanism for communication needs to be established and monitored carefully by the relevant Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board. It should be ensured that all appropriate technological means are employed to facilitate the supervision process.

12.30 Research students and Supervisors have access to policies and procedures of the Institute[2]. Significant difficulties which arise within a supervisor/student relationship are dealt with in this context.

12.31 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. 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).

12.32 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.

# 13 Assessment Procedures

## 13.1 Annual Progression

13.1.1 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.

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[2] All relevant DkIT policies, in force at any given time, apply.

13.1.2 Annual progress monitoring should be completed prior to the end of the academic year.

13.1.3 Evaluation of each Annual Progress Report will be carried out at School level, and will be completed by the student and the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel and endorsed by the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board.

13.1.4 Once endorsed it is the responsibility of the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board to advise the Graduate Studies Office of those students whom are being endorsed for progression to the following year of their study. This notification must be sent to the Graduate Studies Office prior to the end of the academic year.

13.1.5 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.

13.1.6 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 16.

## 13.2 Assessment for Confirmation on, or Transfer to the PhD Register

13.2.1 Students initially admitted on a Master's or PhD-track registration and wishing to transfer to the PhD Register will have to undergo a confirmation procedure generally no earlier than 12 months and no later than 21 months research after initial registration for full-time students and at an appropriate corresponding time for parttime students. This is a distinct and separate exercise to the Annual Progress Review.

13.2.2 Students must make a formal application for transfer to the PhD Register through their respective Graduate Research Programme Board to the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board, whilst notifying the Graduate Studies Office, for approval by the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board. This request can only be made following the formal recommendation from the student's supervisory panel and in consultation with their sponsoring School. Where the student has not been recommended for transfer then the student can appeal the decision through the appropriate registration appeals process detailed in Regulation 18.

13.2.3 All students wishing to transfer to the PhD register are required to undergo an examination process by a PhD Transfer Examination Board. This involves the following:

- Submission of a Transfer Report (double-spaced and not normally more than 50 A4 pages in length) or an equivalent discipline-specific submission, to their Supervisory Panel. For creative and performance practice based projects the Transfer Examination may include a practice based element.

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

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

- 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.

- 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 to justify transfer.

- Oral Examination.

13.2.4 The supervisory panel must nominate an independent external examiner to the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board for consideration and approval. This nomination is then communicated to the Graduate Studies Office and the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board for approval. This nomination must be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed examination process. The independent panel member is not permitted to act as the examiner. The examiner should be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in 13.2.5.

13.2.5 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 lead supervisor;

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

13.2.6 The Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board, in consultation with the supervisory panel, convenes the PhD Transfer Examination 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. He/she shall be unconnected with the programme of research carried out by the candidate under examination.

- The independent external examiner

13.2.7 The PhD Transfer Examination 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 Transfer Report;

- The Examination Panel then orally examines the student

13.2.8 The role of the PhD Transfer Examination 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. The Board can recommend one of the following options:

- Student can transfer to the PhD Register

- The student may resubmit an updated Transfer Report, based on recommendations by the examiners, and re-present for a second examination no later than 6 months after the original examination date. This maybe the case if the examiner believes that there is real potential but that it

  is not possible to make a positive recommendation at the time when transfer is originally requested.

- Student should be registered on the Master's Register and be invited to complete such research as will allow him/her to graduate with a Master's degree

13.2.9 The oral examination should take place on the DkIT campus and only where absolutely necessary, consideration may be given to using the Institute's videoconferencing facilities for the viva voce transfer examination. Standard procedures for conducting a viva voce using videoconferencing must be followed.

13.2.10 The application form requesting confirmation on or transfer to the PhD register should be signed by the examiner(s) and the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board and submitted to the Graduate Studies Office for consideration by the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board. It should include both a report on the oral examination and a general progress report on the student's research performance (as evidenced by a substantial body of work such as a transfer report). The DCU Graduate Research Studies Board will require evidence that the student's progress to date has been satisfactory and that the programme of research envisaged provides a satisfactory basis for work at PhD level.

13.2.11 Where the student has not been recommended for transfer by the Institute then the student can appeal the decision through the appropriate appeals process in Section 18.

## 13.3   Notice of Intention to Submit for Examination

Through the principal supervisor(s), a student must provide three months' notice to the Graduate Studies Office of their intention to submit for examination and provide a typed 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 for appointment by the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board. The Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board must nominate the Independent Chairperson, for

approving by the Graduate Research Studies Board. In the case of practice-based research for Masters or PhD, the Examiners may need to be appointed earlier as a sequence of performance-based examinations may be required.

Candidates should confirm the format of their submission, (see section 14) at this stage, and indicate whether a specific non-disclosure agreement is required.

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 facility of an examination.

The completed thesis must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office, which will send it to the approved examiners. In no circumstances should it be sent to the examiners by either the supervisor or student.

## 13.3 Assessment Processes for Candidates for a Research Degree

13.4.1 Candidates for a doctoral degree will be assessed on the basis of a written thesis and a *viva voce* examination. In the case of Master's candidates, the usual expectation is that there will be no *viva voce* examination. However, an examiner may recommend that a *viva voce* examination be held. In the case of a practice-based award for Masters or PhD, a practice-based element may be required as part of the assessment.

13.4.2 Each candidate for a higher degree by research will be examined by at least one Internal Examiner and at least one External Examiner.

13.4.3 The *viva voce* examination, conducted in private, shall be held at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) unless prior approval has been obtained from the DkIT Graduate Research Studies 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. Standard procedures for conducting a viva voce using videoconferencing must be followed.

13.4.4 The proceedings of the *viva voce* examination shall be supervised by an Independent Chairperson (see Section 16.5) nominated by the Chair of the relevant Graduate Research Programme Board in consultation with the supervisor and approved by GRSB

13.4.5 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.

13.4.6 A candidate for a Master's degree will be required to demonstrate competence in the investigation or critical study of the chosen topic and lucidity in the presentation of the results.

13.4.7 In case of a doctoral of Master's candidate being assessed through a *viva voce* examination, 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. The *viva voce* must proceed as part of the examination of the candidate; examiners cannot recommend that a *viva voce* is deferred based on their examination of the thesis.

13.4.8 In the cases of a Master's candidate who is not being assessed through a *viva voce* examination, the examination reports are completed by both examiners and the Internal Examiner submits them to the Graduate Studies Office. The internal examiner is responsible for communicating the outcome to the appropriate parties.

13.4.9 Following the viva voce the Internal and External Examiners shall furnish the Independent Chairperson with a joint written examination report (Examination Report for the Award of a Higher Degree (by Research) form) 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.

13.4.10 The DkIT Graduate Studies Office will make the necessary arrangements to convene a meeting of the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board for research degrees to consider the examination reports of students who have been examined.

13.4.11 Following the meetings of the DkIT Graduate Research Examination Board, the DkIT Registrar's Office will submit to DCU Academic Council, for its approval, a composite listing of candidates recommended for awards. A reference will also be included summarising all other outcomes and the number of candidates involved.

## 13.5 Approval of Awards by Academic Council

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

13.5.2 All candidates for higher degrees shall be informed in writing by the DkIT Graduate Studies Office of their official position following the meeting of DCU 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.

13.5.3 Re-submission by an unsuccessful candidate may take place only with the approval of DCU Academic Council on the recommendation of, and under the conditions proposed by, the Examiners and with the concurrence of the Graduate Research Examination Board for Research Degrees. As noted in Section 16.6, 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 (Section 18 Appeals).

# 14 Thesis Format

All theses submitted must conform strictly to the regulations and requirements 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.

## 14.1 Formats of Research Thesis

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

For all thesis types, and Generative AI tools used, and the purpose for which they were used, must be declared in the thesis and in the relevant Postgraduate Research (PGR) Forms.

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;
- in the case of a professional doctoral thesis, constitute a significant contribution to existing professional knowledge and practice; and
- be based on work which has been conducted while the candidate has been registered as a research student at DkIT;
- include a list of any Generative AI tools and the purpose for which they were used; and
- where ethical approval was required, either the Institute Research Ethics Committee or School Research Ethics Committee approval letter must be included in the thesis appendices.

## 14.1.1 PhD Thesis (Monograph):

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

### 14.1.2 PhD by Publication:

Students should, ideally, indicate their intention to submit using publications at the time of application for transfer/confirmation on the PhD register but, at the latest, at the time of indicating their intention to submit for examination.

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 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. Candidates should consult the specific guidelines on PhD Thesis by Publication for more information.

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.

Only publications based on work undertaken during the student's period of registration can be included in the thesis without exception. 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.

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. A Declaration of Authorship form for each co-authored chapter must be included in the appendices of the thesis.

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. All papers and the accompanying chapters should be presented and bound (together) in accordance with the regulations in Section 14.6.

### 14.1.3    PhD by Artefact

This format is restricted to candidates undertaking research in disciplines where output in forms other than a monograph (such as a music composition, critical edition, film, multimedia production etc.) are accepted internationally as evidence of scholarly achievement at the level of the research award.  Specific discipline based additional admission requirements, linked to skills based competency, may apply for candidates for research projects intended to be presented in this format.

The format requires:
    A substantial artefact, or portfolio of artefacts.
and
    An accompanying overarching critical commentary which should detail the research questions addressed through the medium of the artefact(s), sets the artefact(s) in the context of existing literature, give a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all elements included, argue the coherence of the submission and justify the methodology adopted. It should evaluate the contribution that the research presented in the submitted artefact makes to the advancement of knowledge in the research area. Candidates should consult the specific guidelines on PhD Thesis by Artefact for more information.

A Declaration of Contribution form for each artefact submitted for examination must be included in the appendices of the thesis.

### 14.1.4 PhD by Creative and/or Performance Practice

This format is restricted to candidates submitting research in forms such as music or theatre performance. Specific additional admission requirements, linked to skills based competency, will apply for candidates for research projects intended to be presented in this format.

The format requires:

A portfolio of creative or performance based elements of substantial nature,

And

An accompanying overarching critical commentary which should detail the research questions addressed through the medium of the creative work / performance in the context of existing practice, give a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all elements included, argue the coherence of the submission, and justify the methodology adopted. It should evaluate the contribution that the research presented in the creative work / performance makes to the advancement of knowledge in the field. Candidates should consult the specific guidelines on PhD Thesis by Creative and/or Performance Practice for more information.

A Declaration of Contribution form for each discrete element submitted for examination must be included in the appendices of the thesis.

### 14.1.5 Professional Doctoral Thesis

The professional doctoral thesis should follow the structures for PhD by Monograph or PhD by Publication. Alternatively, the Professional Doctoral thesis may take the following format:

- a research report; and

- a clinical portfolio or a reflective practice portfolio.

In this case, the research report should constitute no less than 50% of the contribution of the final thesis.

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

### 14.1.6 Research Master's Thesis

The research Master's thesis is a normally a monograph including:

a) an introduction and abstract;

b) critical analysis of existing research;

c) in-depth discussions of the methodological approach taken by the candidate;

d) presentation, and critical analysis, of the findings of the research undertaken by the candidate; and

e) a substantive conclusion which indicates scope for further research arising out of the candidate's research.

The maximum word length, including bibliography and notes, is 45,000. Any appendices remain outside the word limit.

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.

The order in which components b. to d. are presented, and the nature of any additional written work, will vary from discipline to discipline.

### 14.1.7    Master of Arts by Artefact

This format is restricted to candidates undertaking research in disciplines where output in forms other than a monograph (such as a music composition, critical edition, film, multimedia production, arts based works etc.) are accepted internationally as evidence of scholarly achievement at the level of the research award. Specific discipline-based additional admission requirements, linked to skills-based competency, may apply to candidates for research projects intended to be presented in this format.

The format requires:

- An appropriately substantive artefact or portfolio of artefacts  and

An accompanying commentary which should detail the research questions addressed through the medium of the artefact(s), sets the artefact(s) in the context of existing literature, give a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all elements included, argue the coherence of the submission and justify the methodology adopted. It should evaluate the contribution that the research presented in the submitted artefact makes to the advancement of knowledge in the research area. Candidates should consult the specific guidelines on Master of Arts by Artefact for more information.

A Declaration of Contribution form for each artefact submitted for examination must be included in the appendices of the thesis

### 14.1.8       Master of Arts by Creative and/or Performance Practice

This format is restricted to candidates submitting research in disciplines where it is a recognised norm internationally. Specific additional admission requirements, linked to skills-based competency,  The format requires:

- One substantial or a number of less substantial creative or performance-based elements

and

-An accompanying commentary which should detail the research questions addressed through the medium of the creative work / performance in the context of existing practice, give a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all elements included, argue the coherence of the submission, and justify the methodology adopted. It should evaluate the contribution that the research presented in the creative work/performance makes to the advancement of knowledge in the field.  Candidates should consult the specific guidelines on Master of Arts through Creative and/or Performance Practice for more information.

A Declaration of Contribution form for each discrete element submitted for examination must be included in the appendices of the thesis.

## 14.2   Thesis Submission Procedure

14.2.1 The student must provide one electronic PDF copy of the thesis for examination. This should be submitted to Graduate Studies Office in a single PDF file entitled 'pre-examination

copy', along with the student number and date of submission e.g. pre-examination copy_e.g D12345678_01_01_2023. The PDF should also include a footer on each page of the document, with the words 'pre-examination copy' and the submission date. Graduate Studies will inform the student if the examiner(s) have requested a soft-bound printed copy of the thesis, which must be provided directly by the student to Graduate Studies. A supervisor or students should not in any instance, send the thesis directly to an examiner, either in soft-bound printed or electronic format.

14.4.2 On completion of the examination process, and when formal approval of the award has been recommended by examiners, an e-Thesis Declaration form must be submitted. As part of this submission the final approved thesis must be uploaded to secure web space by the principal supervisor. This must include all accompanying material e.g. appendices. This final copy is also subject to the regulations as to format in section 14.6. The candidate and the principal supervisor will be required to sign the form using a digital image of their handwritten signatures. Please note, the thesis declaration held in the body of the final approved thesis should simply include the candidates typed signature. The completed form along with a copy of the final approved thesis (PDF) must be submitted to Graduate Studies.

## 14.5 Thesis Ownership and Access

14.5.1 Copies of the thesis submitted for examination will remain the property of DkIT. The Institute will place an electronic copy of the thesis in the Library for free consultation. The Libraries at DCU 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.

14.5.2 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 approved thesis and questions of the confidentiality of the contents arise, candidates may request and obtain temporary restriction of access up to a maximum of four 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 candidates award. A retrospective application for restriction may not be requested once the thesis has been published.

14.5.3 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).

14.5.4 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.

14.5.5 In exceptional circumstances, following, for example, legislative changes affecting data protection and personal data rights, it may be necessary to restrict access to a thesis or redact parts of it. If such cases arise, the Head of Research and Graduate Studies will be the first point of contact for initiating discussions with the relevant institute parties.

## 14.6 Thesis Design and Layout

14.6.1 The language of the thesis shall normally be either English or Irish. Other languages shall require the approval of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies 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.

14.6.2 A thesis should not be excessively long. The maximum limit for a doctoral thesis is 90,000 words of text, including bibliography and notes and, for a Master's thesis, is 45,000 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 15,000 words for an Artefact / Performance based Master's thesis and 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.

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

14.6.4 The thesis shall:

(a) 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 submission at examination stage and for the final approved thesis submission); and

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

(b) Declaration Page:

The thesis must have a page, immediately following the title page, containing the following declaration:

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 have conformed to the regulations on the use of and declaration of Generative AI, 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:_____

In the thesis submitted for examination, the declaration should be signed by the student using a digital image of their written signature. In the final approved thesis, the student should sign the declaration

(c) Thesis Formatting

(i)  The content must be presented 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) 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.

(iii)     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.

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

(d) 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 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. A list of all publications based on work undertaken during the student's period of registration should also be included prior to the abstract.

(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 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.

# 15 Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees

The purpose of this section is not only to enunciate procedures for the appointment of examiners but also to set out what students can reasonably expect from the Institute regarding the examination of their work. The DkIT Graduate Research Programme Board is responsible for recommending the appointment of both Internal and External Examiners to the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board.

Each candidate for a higher degree by research will be examined by at least one Internal Examiner and at least one External Examiner.

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.

## 15.1 Selection and Nomination of Internal Examiners

15.1.1 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.

15.1.2 The Internal Examiner should normally be a member of staff in DkIT, retired DkIT 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. The internal examiner may be from another Higher Education Institution (including DCU).

15.1.3 In cases where the relevant expertise does not exist in DkIT an internal examiner may be appointed from another Higher Education Institution.

15.1.4 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[3] . 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. Newly appointed staff who are being nominated as Internal Examiners must meet these criteria or will be required to complete all elements of professional development for examiners (course and where applicable exam shadowing) delivered by the Institute; training completed elsewhere will not be accepted.

15.1.5 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.

## 15.2     Selection and Nomination of External Examiners

15.2.1 For research awards, External Examiners are appointed for specific candidates. 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. No distinction should be made, for the purposes of appointing External Examiners, between Master's and doctoral students.

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

15.2.3 If the candidate is a current member of staff of the Institute or was a member of staff of the Institute within a period of five years prior to the notification of intention to

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[3] 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.

submit then two External Examiners are appointed to add an additional layer of independent assurance to the process. Where the candidate holds, or within a period of five years prior to the notification of intention to submit has held, a part-time or short-term contract with the Institute, the Head of School will be requested to determine whether or not the student falls into the category of candidate for whom two External Examiners are required.

15.2.4 In no circumstances may a staff member from DCU act as an External Examiner to DkIT, or vice versa for a postgraduate research award, nor may a staff member of a linked college act as an External Examiner in another linked college.

15.2.5 No individual external to DCU 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.

15.2.6 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.

15.2.7 The External Examiner(s) should be contacted informally by the supervisor to ascertain availability and willingness to undertake the role within the timescale envisaged.

15.2.8 All nominations of External Examiners are submitted for approval to the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board, through the DKIT Graduate Research Studies Board, by means of the Notification of Intention to Submit Thesis for Examination form, which includes an outline curriculum vitae for completion. Approved appointments are valid for a period of 12 months.

15.2.9 External Examiners are expected to have the following qualities and competencies:

- recognised expertise in the area which is the subject matter of the thesis being examined;

- experience in supervising research students to completion at the level of the award sought and in the examination process of such students at the level of the award sought: and

- 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 External Examiner.

15.2.10 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.

15.2.11 It is imperative, for quality assurance purposes, that the External Examiner is independent of DCU 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 DCU or DkIT (in any capacity) in the five years prior to appointment;

- not have been a student of DCU or DkIT in the five years prior to appointment;

- not be a beneficiary of any bursary or remuneration from DCU 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.

### 15.3 Appointment and Examination Procedures

15.3.1 Candidates for research degrees are required to notify their supervisor initially of their intention to submit a thesis for examination, or, where relevant in the case of a creative or performance practice piece, of their intention to deliver a live performance for examination, using the appropriate form. Notice of Intention to submit a thesis must be given to the Graduate Studies Office at least three months' notice and provide a typed 300-word abstract of their work.

15.3.2 On receipt of this notice of intention to submit a thesis, the supervisor is required to consult with the relevant Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board on the selection and nomination of appropriate Internal and External Examiners. The

Chair of the Graduate Research Programme Board is responsible for ensuring the nomination is in line with the regulations, and appoints an Independent Chairperson. The supervisor is responsible for making initial contact with the proposed External Examiner.

15.3.3 Following completion of the process of consultation referred to above, the supervisor is required to submit the completed form to the Graduate Studies Office. Completed forms will be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board for submission to the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board.

15.3.4 Following approval by the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board of the appointment of the Examiners nominated and noting the Independent Chairperson, 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.

15.3.5 Candidates may be required to submit soft-bound copies of the thesis to the Graduate Studies Office if required by the examiner(s). 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. Following receipt of the these copies, the Graduate Studies Office will immediately forward a copy to each Examiner together with the relevant Examiners' Report Form and Academic Regulations for Examiners. Examiners are normally expected to carry out their duties within two 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.

15.3.6 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 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 prior to the viva voce examination.

15.3.7 In the case of a thesis submitted for the award of a Master's degree, a viva voce is not normally required but may be requested by the examiners. In this case, the report instructions in section 13.4.7 apply.

15.3.8 Examiners' Reports and Recommendations will be referred to the next meeting of the Graduate Research Examination Board for consideration and recommendation to the DCU Academic Council (see Section 17 for details).

## 16    REGULATIONS FOR EXAMINATIONS FOR MASTER'S, PhD DEGREES BY RESEARCH

### 16.1 Internal and External Examiners

16.1.1 Each candidate for a higher degree by research will be examined by at least one Internal Examiner and at least one External Examiner (see Section 15 regarding appointment regulations and procedures).

16.1.2 The thesis will be referred by the Graduate Studies Office to the Examiners, who cannot accept it directly from the candidate or the supervisor.

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

### 16.2 Examination of the Thesis

16.2.1 Examiners should assess a Master's thesis in the light of the following criteria:

- the thesis should show evidence of independent thought and work by the candidate;

- the investigation or critical study should be scholarly;

- the candidate should understand the significance of the work; and

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

16.2.2 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.

### 16.3. *Viva Voce* Examination

16.3.1 The viva voce proceedings shall be managed by an Independent Chairperson who is appointed by the relevant Chair of the Graduate 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 DkIT Graduate Research Studies 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.

16.3.2 Candidates must not contact their examiners and vice versa, while in examination; any communication should be through the supervisor(s) to the Independent Chairperson.

16.3.3 The viva voce examination, conducted in private, should be held at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) unless prior approval has been obtained from the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board to hold it elsewhere.

16.3.4 External and Internal Examiners may meet in advance of a viva voce examination, if any of the examiners desires, without a candidate's academic supervisor and/or the Independent Chairperson of the examination being present.

16.3.5 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. A member of the candidate's supervisory panel may be 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 not to be present. If this is indicated, then the supervisor should not be present. The supervisor, where present, is not permitted to participate in the examination. The candidate should provide clarification of any matters only if and when requested by the examiners or the Independent Chairperson. 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.

**16.4 Examiners' Reports and Recommendations**

16.4.1 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.

16.4.2 If an examiner wishes to change the written report on the thesis after the viva voce, then this should be done at the end of the examination or, at the latest, within one

week of the examination (in the latter case, the report should be sent to the Independent Chairperson).

16.4.3 The Chairperson is responsible for sending the examination report to the Graduate Studies Office and for sending the final examination report to the Student and Principal Supervisor .In the case of a Master's candidate where, normally, no viva voce examination is required, the Internal Examiner is responsible for providing details of any corrections to the Student and Principal Supervisor and for sending the completed reports to the Graduate Studies Office. The Graduate Studies Office informs the Student and the Supervisor of the outcome of the examination. The Internal Examiner is responsible for sending the final examination report to the Student and the Principal Supervisor.

16.4.4 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:

- that the degree sought be awarded;

- that the degree sought be conditionally awarded subject to clearly specified textual recommendations;

- that the degree sought be conditionally awarded subject to clearly specified revisions to content;

- that no degree be awarded, but that the candidate be allowed to submit a revised thesis, normally within a year;

- that, where a doctoral award is sought, a Master's degree be awarded instead

- that no degree be awarded as the candidate is unlikely to reach the standard for a research award; or

- that, where a Master's degree was sought, the candidate be advised and permitted to withdraw the thesis for revision and re-submission at a later date for the award of a doctorate, subject to the following conditions: The candidate, prior to such re-submission for the doctoral award, must have been a registered full-time graduate research student for at least thirty one months (or pro rata for a part-time registered postgraduate student). The resubmitted thesis shall be examined in accordance with the regulations for examination of theses presented for a doctoral award and, in an exception to regulation 16.4.6, by a different External Examiner, to be appointed by the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board.

16.4.5 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 examiners. If multiple revisions are required to meet this satisfaction, the Internal Examiner and External Examiner may determine new recommendations by submitting a second recommendation form. 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.

16.4.6 Where no award but a resubmission is recommended, normally the same examiners assess the new thesis and a full examination (including *viva voce* for Doctoral candidates) is undertaken again. In such cases, the period for revision of the thesis and/or presentation for re-examination shall normally be not more than one year from the date when the student is informed of the recommendation. This is the date of the viva voce or, where no viva voce is held (e.g. Research Masters), the date when the Graduate Studies Office communicates the recommendation to the student.

16.4.7 Where a Master's degree is to be awarded instead of the doctorate sought, a reformatted thesis must be provided, revised to the satisfaction of the Internal Examiner and/or the External Examiner(s) as may be determined by the examiners.

16.4.8 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 review corrections within six weeks of receiving the revised thesis.

## 16.5    Remit of the Independent Chairperson

16.5.1 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 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 any corrections provided by the examiners, will be communicated by the Chairperson to the Student and Principal Supervisor 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.

16.5.2 The Chairperson should be drawn from a pool of experienced academic staff with experience of doctoral supervision and/or 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. It is not allowable that the independent panel member act as the Chairperson.

16.5.3 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.

16.5.4 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.

16.5.5 A candidate may be asked by the Chairperson to introduce their research briefly and summarise the main findings.

16.5.6 The length of the *viva voce* examination may vary in accordance with different disciplinary practices, and it will also depend on the examiners' requirements. As a guideline, it should normally be in the range one-and-a-half hours to three hours.

16.5.7 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.

16.5.8 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).

16.5.9 In cases where no award but a resubmission is recommended, the Chairperson informs the examiners, supervisor(s) and candidate of regulations 16.4.6 regarding examination of a resubmitted thesis.

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

16.5.11 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.

## 16.6 Procedure after Examination

16.6.1 The 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 DCU 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.

16.6.2 All examination results and recommendations are subject to final approval and confirmation by DCU Academic Council. Following the meeting of the DCU Academic Council, the outcome of all examamination results and recommendations will be communicated to the DkIT's Registrar's Office by DCU's Registry.

16.6.3 The 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.

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

16.6.5 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, as detailed in Section 18.

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

# 17 Graduate Research Examination Board

## 17.1 Establishment of Examination Board

17.1.1 The Institute shall constitute a Graduate Research Examination Board chaired by the Chair of the Graduate Research Studies Board or their nominee.

17.1.2 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 DCU Dean of Graduate Studies and a representative of the DCU Registry. Supervisors of candidates who have been examined, and Internal Examiners of same, will be invited to attend.

## 17.2 Scheduling of Examination Board

17.2.1 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.

17.2.2 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 of the Graduate Research Studies Board.

## 17.3 Remit of Examination Board

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

- consider and approve (or otherwise where necessary) examiners' reports and their recommendations in respect of candidates presenting for Research Master's and Doctoral Degrees.

- 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 approving results for graduate training elements.

17.3.2 Processing of examiners' reports and their recommendations:

- The Board will be required to ensure that the examination process for each candidate has been carried out in accordance with these Academic Regulations.

- The Board will be required to draw the attention of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board to individual comments by examiners if such comments are deemed to provide useful feedback to the Institute.

- 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 DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board and DCU Academic Council for their consideration. The subsequent decision of DCU 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.

## 17.4 Documentation for Examination Boards

17.4.1 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.

# 18 Appeals

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. Transfer/confirmation recommendations are approved at the DkIT and DCU Graduate Research Studies Board, and the opportunity to appeal follows notification of the decision of the GRSB. Examination recommendations are approved at the relevant Graduate Research Examination Board meeting 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 Registrars' Office.

## 18.1 Grounds for Appeal

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

18.1.2 An appeal will only be considered on the following grounds:

i. There was a failure to adhere to, or an insufficiency in the regulations contained in, *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*.

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

v. There was a material administrative error or a material irregularity in assessment procedures which have made a real and substantial difference to his/her result.

18.1.3 An appeal cannot be made on the basis of 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.

18.1.4 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 policies and procedures outlined in Academic Regulation 12.31 and 12.32.

## 18.2 Submission

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

18.2.2 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 Academic Calendar, and late appeals are not considered.

18.2.3 A student has the opportunity to appeal a decision of the supervisory panel or the outcome of an examination as follows:

| Type of Appeal | Opportunity to Appeal |
|---|---|
| Decision not to transfer/confirm on the PhD Register | When the student is notified by the Graduate Studies Office that the PGR3 Form was approved by the Graduate Research Studies Board |
| Decision not to allow progression | When the outcome of the annual progress monitoring is communicated to the Graduate Studies Office |
| Outcome of an examination | When the student is notified of the outcome of the examination. |

## 18.3 Appeals Committee

18.3.1 The DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board will establish an Appeals Committee to consider appeals. The term of the Appeals Committee is three years, but replacement members can be appointed by the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board, should that be required within this timeframe.

18.3.2 The Appeals Committee is normally chaired by the Chair of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board. The Secretary of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board acts as Secretary to the Appeals Committee, and attends in a non-voting capacity.

18.3.3 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 outside the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board from a pool of very experienced in research student supervision and examination.

18.3.4 No member of the Appeals Committee can consider a case where they have a conflict of interest or prior significant involvement. The Chair of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board can appoint a temporary member if the total membership falls below 4, or gender or School mix is not achieved because of such circumstances.

Where the Chair of DkIT GRSB 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

18.3.5 Decisions of the Appeals Committee are subject to approval by the DkIT Academic Council.

## 18.4 Outcome of an Appeal

18.4.1 The student will be notified of the outcome of their appeal once the decision of the GRSB Appeals Committee is approved by the Graduate Research Studies Board.

18.4.2 Successful appeals will not result in a new academic decision as the GRSB 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 1:

# Guidelines for candidates, supervisors and examiners on the format of 'PhD by Artefact' or 'Masters by Artefact'

**Background**

In some academic disciplines, making research awards on the basis of scholarly work presented in diverse formats has become accepted. There is, for example, a small but long tradition of doctoral awards for music composition, stretching back to the medieval university, which is currently undergoing expansion worldwide. The increase in engagement with scholarly ideas through film, music composition and various forms of media including innovative technologies has led to these as recognised forms of high level scholarly enquiry.

DKIT regulations regarding submissions for a PhD or Master's award are given in the *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees* ('the regulations'), and they allow for submission in a format which includes two substantial elements:

PhD:

- An accompanying overarching critical commentary (see regulation 14.1.3) and
- a substantial artefact or portfolio of artefacts

Masters:

- An accompanying commentary which should detail the research questions addressed (see regulation 14.1.7) and
- an appropriately substantive artefact or portfolio of artefacts.

Candidates considering submitting using this format should consult the regulations as well as these guidelines. Disciplines for which a research award on the basis of artefacts is particularly relevant include: music composition and music technology, theatre practice, film, sound, multimedia, arts based works or communications studies. However, it may also be relevant to cross disciplinary projects involving quite different fields such as computer science, so this list is not exhaustive. An artefact may be a musical score, theatre script, or a substantial piece of practice-based research via a media or art production, always accompanied by a sustained exercise in critical study.

**The Standard of a PhD / Masters**

Irrespective of the format for PhD / Masters submission, the standard by which the work is evaluated remains exactly the same as research degree awards through other formats: in the case of a PhD, a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the field; in the case of a Masters by Research, scholarship which makes an apt contribution to knowledge in the discipline The examination will seek to establish originality, rigour and substance of contribution at a scholarly level appropriate to the award. While the artefact(s) constitute the main body of the thesis, and these in themselves must contribute significant (appropriate to the level of the award) new knowledge to the field, candidates must also be aware that the examiners' judgement of the entirety of the submission is the sole determinant of the outcome.

For Masters by Research and PhD awards, the usual DkIT regulations will apply.

At PhD level examiners will consider the coherence of the entire work and the quality of the candidate's defence of the thesis at *viva voce*. This includes the appropriateness of methodologies used, the rigour of critical thought and analysis, the quality of argument, and of presentation, the significance of the contribution to new knowledge, and where collaboration has been necessary as part of the production, the candidate's particular contribution to this aspect of the submission. The accompanying analytical commentary is therefore an equally important element in ensuring that examiners are convinced that the work presented as a whole meets the standard of the research award, especially with regard to articulating the coherence of the work and the role the candidate played in work which was produced collaboratively. For these reasons, it is very important that the written document is approached as an integral part of research, progressed in parallel with the development of the artefact.

The award of a doctoral degree, and that of a Masters by Research, is based solely on the work presented for examination and carried out during the period of registration with the Institute for the research degree.
- There is no question of the academic award being made simply in recognition of creative work which has received popular or critical acclaim, or of a research award being 'due' to a recognised composer/ director/ collector/editor.
- The thesis overall may be deemed to fall short of the required standard, even if the artefact(s) attract recognition, awards or success outside the academic arena.

**Artefacts which can be included for PhD or Masters**

Artefacts which can be included in the submission are limited to those which are based on work undertaken, under supervision, during the student's period of registration. Work produced prior to this is excluded.

The format of 'artefact' is broadly interpreted, and examples may include creative works, media productions or art (e.g, music compositions, film, digital media, music technology/software, photographs, art based work, etc.). It also includes definitive texts such as critical editions. The artefact, or collection of artefacts must be substantial, and the particulars of this are dictated by norms in the field. Some examples are noted here for illustrative purposes. In music composition, at doctoral level, the compositions must be no less than 90 minutes in duration, with at least one element that is an extended work; at Masters level the compositions must be in the region of 45 minutes in duration. For media productions in linear form this may be audiovisual material. The submission at Masters level should be a maximum of 1 hr at Masters level and the submission at doctoral level should be a maximum of 2 hrs. . For responsive media productions at doctoral level a minimum of 40 minutes of user engagement is a useful guideline; at Masters level 25 minutes is a guide. For theatre practice, at doctoral level the portfolio of artefacts would normally be equivalent to two full-length plays; at Masters level a portfolio equivalent to one full-length play is a useful guide.

**Considerations at time of admission**

Prospective students should first seek the support of a member of staff qualified to supervise a research award in this format and have demonstrated their capacity at this level through a

review of their recent work in this area. Normal minimum admission criteria for research degrees apply as do expectations regarding readiness for academic and analytical writing. This is of key importance, and students applying for MA (Research) award should meet the Institute entry regulations, while those applying for doctoral study should also meet the Institute entry regulations or have gained a Master's degree in a cognate or creative discipline. In addition, this type of PhD/Masters format should be identified and, in the context of the intended format, student suitability in terms of his/her skill's base should be established at time of admission to the Institute. Students must be able to provide evidence of their ability and skills to conduct practice-based research. In the case of composition it would, for example, be a prerequisite that the candidate was already at an advanced level of composition and could demonstrate this through scores and publically performed works. In the case of media productions evidence could be in the form of a creative portfolio including examples of filmmaking, photography, phonography, multimedia projects or other appropriate creative practice.

The decision to opt for a research project in this format should be made jointly by an applicant and the proposed supervisors(s). It is important that the supervisor has directly relevant scholarly output, and is familiar with standards internationally for this format. Supervisors must provide guidance with regard to the expected academic level, and the scope within the proposed topic to make a contribution at the level of the award. Both applicant and supervisor should consider the potential risks inherent in this approach, and the likely timeframe the work might take to complete. Candidates may not have a good understanding of these aspects and have unrealistic expectations based on past successes, or related (but not necessarily academic) writing composition or media production, so supervisor advice is key at this stage.

Particular care should be taken in applying the Institute *RPL Policy* in such admissions. Experience and expertise in composing or film production for example while vital, does not at all necessarily imbue the requirements for writing at a scholarly level. All RPL based applications should be considered using the process outlined in the policy, and equivalence of prior learning to the level 8 (or 9 in the case of a PhD candidate) award, usually required for admission onto the register, rigorously assessed. There are two aspects to the submission, and there is an onus on the Institute to ensure a candidate can have a reasonable expectation to successfully execute both.

Subsequent to admission, the intended format should be taken into account in identifying developmental opportunities for the student, setting of milestones and monitoring of progress. At the transfer stage (in the case of candidates on PhD-track), the intended format should be reconfirmed, and again noted on the 'intention to submit' stage.

**Student Contribution to the Work**

It is recognised that some aspects of the submission may have involved other individuals in the production (e.g. in the case of a film). It is expected that in such cases, the candidate has had at least a director/producer level role and has had full artistic control, including an input into the selection of other personnel involved. The candidate should include a signed statement of their contribution to the work and the specific contribution of others, both to be independently verified in all cases. Where possible and practicable this should be done by the principal supervisor and all collaborators / support personnel signing off on their agreement with the candidate's statement. However, in some cases, due to the number of such people, or the nature and/or organisation of the work, it may be more appropriate for the verification to be given by

both the principal supervisor, and by another person external to the Institute who was in a position to verify the detail. 'Sign-off' in this case may be via electronic means.

In order to prepare to draft such a statement, and to evidence a candidate's contribution, it is best practice to maintain a reflective journal over the period of registration which captures aspects of the production or process as they evolve. Interactions and influences of technical and artistic collaborators is reflected in the journal, which may be included as an appendix to the submission where relevant.

There is no 'formula for success' in terms of the work included. The criteria candidates and their supervisors should use in judging whether the work is sufficient are the same as the criteria applied to all Masters or PhD submissions, and relate to the substance of the original and significant contribution to the field made by the candidate.

## External Examiners

These guidelines and the relevant extract from the regulations should be provided to potential external examiners at the first stage of (normally informal) contact, so that they can evaluate whether they are comfortable with undertaking the task of examination of a thesis in this format.  It is expected that all examiners of a submission of this type have a strong record of scholarly output relevant to the format of artefact, and are in a position to evaluate the work in the context of international norms in the field at the level of the award.

### Presentation and examination of the various elements of the thesis

As described in the regulations, the overarching critical document should:
> "detail the research questions addressed through the medium of the artefact(s), sets the artefact(s) in the context of existing literature, give a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all elements included, argue the coherence of the submission and justify the methodology adopted. It should evaluate the contribution that the research presented in the submitted artefact makes to the advancement of knowledge in the research area."

The minimum length of this element of the thesis is 30,000 words for PhD award (or 15,000 in the case of a Masters award), however in many instances it may be significantly longer than this.. The standard of presentation of the written thesis should be commensurate with those for a PhD / Masters (by Research)  monograph.

Compositions should be presented in the printed format of a musical score using conventional notation or extended and novel notational formats where appropriate. The analytical commentary should follow the usual format and style for thesis presentation. A student may choose to include a digital submission with the thesis but this is not a requirement.

Artefacts which do not 'lie flat in an A4 format', i.e are non-textual in nature, must be presented in a way which facilitates appropriate access to examiners. This may take the form of a live event (an exhibition or a performance) or a production, but it very much depends on the artefact. It is important that examiners have read the written part of the thesis prior to accessing work in this way. Poor sequencing or timing could undermine the examination process. It is also important to note that it is direct access to the artefact, and not to a record of it that must be afforded to examiner and which is examined. In the case of a PhD, examiners

must have time to reflect on both elements of the thesis submission prior to holding of a *viva voce.* For a Masters award, the standard DkIT regulations apply.

It is also important that such artefact(s) are captured in some digital format for the purposes of being archived with the written aspects of the submission. This may require recording of an exhibition, installation or performance. It is very important to note that this record is not the basis of the examination, and is done simply to provide a complete record of the work for which the research award was made. Subject to resources, technical support may be available in the relevant School or Department to facilitate such recording. It is required to be of a standard fit for archiving purposes, but not to include post-production which would detract from or disguise elements of the student's work evaluated.

## Archiving of Theses submitted in this format.

In line with institute policy, PhD and Masters theses submitted in this format will be made available on the DKIT STOR electronic repository, subject to the same procedures as monographs. In terms of text based elements, the electronic version has to be exactly the same as the final approved thesis. Elements which cannot be presented as a pdf must be archived in another digital format, and made available with the e-thesis. Supervisors should engage with the library staff at an early stage to plan how this will be done.

It is important that any issues relating to Intellectual Property and Copyright are resolved prior to submission of the thesis just as for monograph-format submissions. An embargo to a maximum of four years can apply to theses submitted in this format, as it can for the traditional monograph, should there be valid reasons to apply this.

# Appendix 2:

## Guidelines for candidates, supervisors and examiners on the format of 'PhD or Masters by Research through Creative or Performance Practice'

DKIT regulations regarding submissions for a PhD and Masters by Research awards are given in the *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees* ('the regulations'), and they allow for submission in a format which includes two substantial elements:

PhD:
- An accompanying critical commentary (see regulation 14.1.4) and
- one or more creative or performance-based elements of substantial nature.
  MA:
- an accompanying critical commentary (see regulation 14.1.8)  and
- one or more creative or performance-based elements.

Candidates considering submitting using this format should consult the regulations as well as these guidelines.

Disciplines for which a research award on the basis of creative or performance practice is particularly relevant include music and theatre. However, it may also be relevant to cross disciplinary projects involving quite different fields.

**Background**

In some academic disciplines, making research awards on the basis of scholarly work presented in diverse formats, including a performance or creative work, has become accepted. The UK Arts Humanities Research Board has long since accepted a principle that in some areas of research, performance may indeed be the only appropriate mode of investigation. That notwithstanding, there was considerable discourse around the acceptance and evaluation of such work as research at the time of the introduction of the UK Research Assessment Exercise and for many years thereafter[4]. A particular focus was on the distinction between high quality creative work (however well-researched), and that which makes a significant research contribution, on the role and status of an exhibition or performance and relationship between it and the permanent reference for subsequent scholars, and on guidelines and best practices

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[4] Angela Piccini and Baz Kershaw, 2003. Practice as Research in Performance: from epistemology to evaluation. *Journal of Media Practice*: 4 (2): 113-123.

for evaluation. These DCU guidelines draw significantly from output of a project[5] called *Practice as Research in Performance* (PARIP) (2000-2005) which looked at such research within academic contexts, and aim to deliver highest standards.

Although terminology differs slightly, institutions in Ireland including UL, NUIG (film) and UU award Research Degrees based on creative or performance practice, as does QQI. Internationally, many institutions such as the University of London Goldsmiths, University of York, University of Leeds, Royal College of Music and Birmingham City University/Birmingham Conservatoire award Research Degrees on this basis.

**The Standard of a PhD / Masters**

Irrespective of the format for PhD / Masters submission the standard by which the work is evaluated remains exactly the same as Research Degree awards through other formats: in the case of a PhD, a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the field; in the case of Masters by Research, scholarship which makes an apt contribution to knowledge in the discipline. The examination will seek to establish originality, rigour and substance of contribution at a scholarly level appropriate to the level of the award. While the creative or performance practice element(s) constitute the main body of the thesis, and these in themselves must contribute significant new knowledge to the field, candidates must also be aware that the examiners' judgement of the entirety of the submission is the sole determinant of the outcome.

At PhD level examiners will consider the coherence of the entire work and the quality of the candidate's defence of the thesis at *viva voce*. This includes the appropriateness of methodologies used, the rigour of critical thought and analysis, the quality of argument, and of presentation, the significance of the contribution to new knowledge, and where collaboration has been necessary as part of the production, the candidate's particular contribution to this aspect of the submission. The accompanying analytical commentary is therefore an equally important element in ensuring that examiners are convinced that the work presented as a whole meets the standard of the research award, especially with regard to articulating the coherence of the work and the role the candidate played in work which was produced collaboratively. The work must have separable, demonstrable research findings that are abstractable for subsequent scholars, and not locked into the experience of the performance.

A reflective journal which captures all aspects of the performance practice process should be maintained, and it is important that the written document is approached as an integral part of the creative practice research, progressed in parallel with the performance or creative element.

[5] Nelson, R. and Andrews, S., 2003, *The regulations and protocols governing Practice as Research (PaR) in the performing arts in the UK leading to the award of PhD*, PARIP, http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/par_phd.htm, accessed Dec 11th 2015.

The award of doctorate, and that of Masters (by Research), is based solely on the work presented for examination and carried out during the period of registration with the Institute for the research degree.

- There is no question of the academic award being made simply in recognition of creative work which has received popular or critical acclaim, or of a research award being 'due' to a recognised performer.
- The thesis overall may be deemed to fall short of the required standard, even if the works performed attract recognition, awards or success outside the academic arena.

Performances and creative practice which can be included in the submission are limited to those which are based on work undertaken, under supervision, during the student's period of registration. Work produced prior to this is excluded.

The performance element must be substantial, and the particulars of this are dictated by norms in the field. For example in music performance, at PhD level, no less than three major public recitals, and two lecture recitals/presentations on work in progress would normally be required  At Masters level, two public recitals and one lecture recital would normally be required. Similar norms will apply in other fields such as Theatre Practice, Media Installations, etc.

**Considerations at time of admission**

Prospective students should first seek the support of a member of staff qualified to supervise a research award in this format and have demonstrated their capacity at this level through a review of their recent work in this area.

Normal minimum admission criteria for research degrees apply as do expectations regarding readiness for academic and analytical writing.

In addition, this type of format should be identified and, in the context of the intended format, student suitability in terms of his/her skill's base should be established at time of admission to the Institute. In the case of music performance it would, for example, be a prerequisite that the candidate was already at a professional standard  (PhD) or advanced standard (Masters) of practice and could demonstrate this through evidencing a record of achievement at a high level. An interview/audition would also normally be required.

The decision to opt for a research project in this format should be made jointly by an applicant and the proposed supervisors(s). It is important that the supervisor has directly relevant scholarly output, and is familiar with standards internationally for this format. Supervisors must provide guidance with regard to the expected academic level, and the scope within the proposed topic to make a contribution at the level of the award. Both applicant and supervisor should consider the potential risks inherent in this approach, and the likely timeframe the work might take to complete. Candidates may not have a good understanding of these aspects and have unrealistic expectations based on past successes, or related (but not necessarily academic) creative of performance work, so supervisor advice is key at this stage. It is also important to consider the availability of resources which will be required to support the

research and its examination (which may be considerable), and projects should not be undertaken unless these are available.

As part of the admission process, the candidate should be asked to develop a written statement indicating the topic to be investigated, the research questions and aims of the project the methodologies to be used, the conceptual framework and the proposed outcomes (practice and written). Resources required (space, access to facilities, production budgets etc.) should also be outlined and the School must consider that it is in a position to support such a project in the appropriate way. Where a candidate is suggesting use of their own resources, the adequacy of these to fulfil the aims of the project should be established. The scope, likely timing and location of examinable presentation(s) for the PhD / Masters should be planned and agreed.

Particular care should be taken in applying the Institute *RPL Policy for Research Awards* in such admissions. Experience and expertise in creative or performance practice for example while vital, does not at all necessarily imbue the requirements for writing at a scholarly level. All RPL based applications should be considered using the process outlined in the policy, and equivalence of prior learning to the level 8 (or 9 in the case of a PhD) award, usually required for admission onto the register, rigorously assessed, including interview/audition. There are two aspects to the submission, and there is an onus on the Institute to ensure a candidate can have a reasonable expectation to successfully execute both.

Subsequent to admission, the intended format should be taken into account in identifying developmental opportunities for the student, setting of milestones and monitoring of progress. At the transfer stage (in the case of PhD track), the intended format should be reconfirmed, and again noted on the 'intention to submit' stage.

**Student Contribution to the Work**

It is recognised that some aspects of the performance may have involved other individuals in the production, for example, a performance with accompaniment. It is expected that in such cases, the candidate has had full artistic control, including an input into the selection of other personnel involved and that the candidate includes a signed statement of their contribution to the work and the specific contribution of others, both to be independently verified in all cases. Where possible and practicable this should be done by the principal supervisor and all collaborators / support personnel signing off on their agreement with the candidate's statement. However, in some cases, due to the number of such people, or the nature and/or organisation of the work, it may be more appropriate for the verification to be given by both the principal supervisor, and by another person external to the institute who was in a position to verify the detail. 'Sign-off' in this case may be via electronic means.

In order to prepare to draft such a statement, and to evidence a candidate's contribution, it is best practice to maintain a reflective journal over the period of registration which captures aspects of the production or process as they evolve. Interactions and influences of technical and artistic collaborators is reflected in the journal, which may be included as an appendix to the submission where relevant.

There is no 'formula for success' in terms of the work included. The criteria candidates and their supervisors should use in judging whether the work is sufficient are the same as the criteria applied to all PhD and Masters submissions, and relate to the substance of the original and significant contribution to the field made by the candidate.

**Supervision**

Students must afford reasonable access to their process to supervisors, who will provide feedback in a manner which parallels that for written work.

**Presentation and examination of the various elements of the thesis**

1.  The presentation of formally examinable practice should not normally be more than one calendar year in advance of the final written submission. The performance(s) or creative works must be public, with access facilitated for examiners.

    It is important that examiners have read relevant contextualising comment prior to accessing each element of the work in this way. Poor sequencing or timing could undermine the examination process. It is also important to note that it is direct access to the performance or creative practice piece, and not to a record of it that must be afforded to examiners and which is examined.

    It is nonetheless also important that performances are captured in some digital format for the purposes of being archived with the written aspects of the submission. This may require recording of an exhibition, installation or performance. It is very important to note that this record is not the basis of the examination, and is done simply to provide a complete record of the work for which the research award was made, and to provide a reference for future scholars. In whatever format, a copy of this record must be included with the written thesis as an appendix.

    Subject to resources, technical support may be available in the relevant School or Department to facilitate such recording. It is required to be of a standard fit for archiving purposes, but to include post-production which would detract from or disguise elements of the student's work evaluated.

2.  As described in the regulations, the overarching critical document should:
    "detail the research questions addressed through the medium of the creative work / performance in the context of existing practice, give a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all elements included, argue the coherence of the submission, and justify the methodology adopted. It should evaluate the contribution that the research presented in the creative work / performance makes to the advancement of knowledge in the field."

The minimum length of this element of the thesis is: 30,000 words for PhD award; 15,000 words for Masters award. However in many instances it may be significantly longer than this. Students should, at an early stage, familiarise themselves with the norm in their field. The standard of presentation of the written thesis should be commensurate with those for a PhD or Masters monograph.

Examiners must have time to reflect on both elements of the thesis submission prior to holding of a *viva voce.* The submission as a whole will be the subject of the *viva voce* examination.  For a Masters award, the standard DkIT regulations apply.

## Examiners

These guidelines and the relevant extract from the regulations should be provided to potential external and internal examiners at the first stage of (normally informal) contact, so that they can evaluate whether they are comfortable with undertaking the task of examination of a thesis in this format.

It is expected that all examiners of a submission of this type have a strong record of scholarly output relevant to performance based research, or practice as research, and are in a position to evaluate the work in the context of international norms in the field at the level of the award. There are challenges relating to finding suitable examiners for this format, ensuring continuity across evaluations of elements of the thesis over time, and coordinating opportunities to access process.

It may be necessary to appoint examiners much earlier than is customary for traditionally written PhD or Masters (by Research) theses written in the traditional format. Where external examiners meet candidates prior to the final *viva voce* (in the case of  PhD or relevant Masters awards), care must be taken to ensure maintenance of an appropriate professional distance.

- Feed-back on any work they may observe which is not formally for examination should be avoided, so that subsequent process is not influenced.
- Any post-presentation discussion of an examined element should be confined to examiner questions on points of clarification about the process and issues concerning the practice itself, reserving more overarching or conceptual questions to the *viva voce*.

Costs relating to examination (which may require 2 or more visits to the institute or another venue) should be discussed with Registrar's Office.

## Archiving of Theses submitted in this format.

In line with institute policy, PhD and Masters (by Research) theses submitted in this format will be made available on the DkIT STOR electronic repository, subject to the same procedures as monographs. In terms of text based elements, the electronic version has to be exactly the same as the final approved thesis.  Performances upon which assessment was based must be recorded and archived in digital format, and made available with the e-thesis. Supervisors

should engage with the library staff at an early stage to ensure the digital format planned is one which can be accommodated.

It is important that any issues relating to Intellectual Property and Copyright are resolved prior to submission of the thesis just as for monograph-format submissions. An embargo to a maximum of four years can apply to theses submitted in this format, as it can for the traditional monograph, should there be valid reasons to apply this.

# Appendix 3

## Examination Guidelines for Performance Practice Component of MA/PhD by Research

A Masters or PhD by Research in Music may take the following forms: written dissertation, public recitals, lecture recitals, music editions, compositions and practice-based portfolios, music technology and software development, recordings and audio-visual materials, catalogues and other appropriate models relevant to the discipline. The delivery format and weighting of the component parts of each submission will be agreed between the student and the supervisory panel. The submission may consist of a practice element supported by critical commentary indicating the project's originality and contribution to the discipline or interdisciplinary field.

The submission as a whole should demonstrate artistic skill and originality.

- In the case of a recital the examination includes a music performance by the candidate. The candidate is required to submit a programme of repertoire including detailed programme notes, and copies of music to be performed, at least two weeks in advance of the recital examination to the Independent Chairperson for circulation to the examiners. Recitals shall normally be of 45 minutes duration.

- An Independent Chairperson, in consultation with the supervisory panel, convenes the Examination Panel for the purposes of examining each component/examination. The Panel will consist of the Chairperson, extern examiner and intern examiner. Normally, the Independent Chairperson (appointed by the Graduate Research Programme Board) should be drawn from a pool of experienced academic staff with experience of postgraduate student supervision, having supervised a student to completion to the level of the award sought. He/she shall be unconnected with the programme of research carried out by the candidate under examination. The role of the Independent Chairperson, as detailed in section 14 of the regulations, is primarily to ensure that the Institute's regulations on PhD transfer are adhered to.

- In the case of a lecture-recital the candidate is required to submit a programme of repertoire including detailed programme notes, copies of music to be performed and a contextual document at least two weeks in advance to the Chairperson for circulation to the examiners. The lecture-recital needs to be focused on one aspect of the students' research, one for which the lecture-recital formatted is deemed to be the most appropriate. There needs to be a purpose to the discussion and the supporting repertoire. Lecture-recitals shall normally be of 45 minutes duration. The lecturerecital should be appropriately illustrated with approximately 20-25 minutes dedicated to the oral presentation and 20-25 minutes to the musical selections. Usually the talking and performing are intermingled and most lecture- recitals do not have an intermission.
- Recital and lecture-recital examinations are open to the public.
- Recital and lecture-recital examinations do not have time and space for questions.
- The examination is normally recorded by Institute personnel. Unauthorised recording of the examination is not permitted.

The role of the Examination panel is to determine if the work presented meets the learning outcomes of the programme of study. The panel can recommend one of the following options:

- Pass
- Fail and resubmit. Maximum of three attempts allowed. The students should normally re-present no more than six months and no less than 3 months after a failed attempt. • Fail (after third attempt)

1. In exceptional circumstances it is possible for one member of the Examination Panel to examine the student by using appropriate technological means.
2. Where the student does not pass each examination the student can appeal the decision through the appropriate appeals process.


### Examination of the Lecture Recital

Examiners should assess a Master's lecture recital in the light of the following criteria:
- The lecture-recital should show evidence of independent thought and work by the candidate;
- The investigation or critical study should be scholarly;
- The candidate should understand the significance of the work; and
- The lecture-recital should be communicated in a clear, succinct and grammatically correct manner.

### Examination of the Recital

The recital comprised of repertoire appropriate to the level of examination
- The candidate demonstrated technique appropriate to the level of examination
- The recital was a balanced performance that communicated an understanding of expressive, stylistic, musical and structural issues

- Where appropriate, the candidate communicated well with other players, demonstrating good listening and ensemble skills, and leadership