

Regulations for Higher Research Degrees

THE PhD DEGREE

(Obtainable in any College of the University)

The University may grant the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) to graduates of the University or to graduates of any University, or to candidates of advanced standing, either within or without Ireland, who have:

- a) In the case of a full-time candidate, carried out research in the University for a period of four years and attended such a programme of study as may be prescribed by Regulations. The relevant College will reduce this period where the thesis has been approved for examination prior to the end of the four year period. Fees will be applied until the end of the semester in which the thesis is submitted.
- b) In the case of a part-time candidate, carried out research in the University for a period of six years and attended such a programme of study as may be prescribed by Regulations. The relevant College will reduce this period where the thesis has been approved for examination prior to the end of the six year period. Fees will be applied until the end of the semester in which the thesis is submitted.
- c) Complied with such Regulations and passed such examinations, if any, as may be prescribed.

Entry Requirements and Application Procedures

- 1) To be eligible to enter on a programme of study and research for the degree of PhD a candidate must have reached a high honours standard at the examination for the primary degree or presented such other evidence as will satisfy the Head of School and the College of his/her fitness.
- 2) The application, together with the recommendation of the Head of School, shall be considered by the College in which the programme is to be pursued. The title of the thesis, or a short description outlining the nature of the work, must be provided to the College when the candidate is being recommended for acceptance. If the candidate's application is approved by the College, he/she must register as a PhD candidate for the period set out at (a) or (b), as relevant, above.
- 3) The Academic Council is empowered to withdraw the acceptance of any candidate on the recommendation of the College concerned.

Supervision

- 4) The College, on the nomination of the Head of School will assign a permanent member of University academic staff to be the primary supervisor of the candidate's research. The College may allow for co-supervision of the thesis. In the case of co-supervision, one of the supervisors need not be a member of the staff of the University. The name(s) of the supervisor(s) and the names of the three members of the candidate's Graduate Research Committee nominated by the Head of School in consultation with Head of Discipline must be forwarded when the candidate's name is submitted to the College for approval.
- 5) Unless permission is given to the candidate by the Academic Council, on the recommendation of the relevant College, to work elsewhere under the general direction of the primary supervisor, the research will be carried out in the School mainly responsible for the subject area concerned but, where the research is interdisciplinary in nature, there shall be due co-operation between the main School and the other School(s) involved.
- 6) The candidate shall pursue research for the period set out at (a) or (b) above and shall also follow such a programme of study in the University as may be prescribed by the College.
- 7) A formal review of the research candidate's progress is carried out by the candidate's Graduate Research Committee, at least annually. The supervisor shall submit a written report according to the local agreed format on the candidate's progress and the Graduate Research Committee shall review this, together with a written report (according to the local agreed format) from the candidate, and following a meeting, makes a recommendation to the sub-committee of the College on progression, chaired by the Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies. Following consideration of this recommendation, a formal decision on progression shall be made by the sub-committee of the College. A candidate may appeal a decision not to allow progression to the Standing Committee of Academic Council.
- 8) Candidates whose theses have not been approved for examination within the due period from the date of registration must re-apply to the relevant College setting out justification for the requested extension of the allowed time period.

Examination

- 9) The final draft of the thesis must be approved. This approval is obtained by completing the 'Approval for Examination' form EOG 020 which is duly signed by the supervisor(s), the candidate, and a member of the

candidate's Graduate Research Committee. The completed form is subsequently submitted to the Examinations Office. Where a candidate considers that approval for the submission of the thesis has been withheld unreasonably, s/he may appeal to the Dean of the College.

Submission of the Thesis

- 10) The candidate must follow the directions on format, layout and presentation of a thesis, as described below. Three copies of the PhD thesis, spiral or gum-bound, must be lodged with the Examinations Office. Each copy of the thesis must be accompanied by:
- a) a 'Summary of the Contents', not exceeding 300 words in length
 - b) a copy of the completed form EOG 020.

Directions on Format, Layout and Presentation

There must be a title page which shall contain the following information:

- a) The full title (and subtitle, if any)
- b) The volume number and total number of volumes, if more than one
- c) The full name of the candidate, followed, if desired, by any degree and/or professional qualification(s)
- d) The name(s) of the supervisor(s), school(s), component discipline(s), institution
- e) The month and year of submission.

Table of Contents

The 'Table of Contents', which should not be over-detailed, shall immediately follow the title page.

Format and Layout

The text must be printed on good quality (110g/m²) A4 size paper with a left-hand margin of 4 cm. A maximum of one-and-half line-spacing, left justified only, an easily readable layout and double sided printing are recommended for the body text. More compact formats, with smaller font sizes, are usually appropriate for certain sections, such as reference lists, bibliographies and some kinds of appendices. Pages must be numbered consecutively, with page numbers located centrally at the bottom, and chapter headers at the top, of each page. Diagrams, graphs, photographs and tables should be properly numbered and located in relation to the text.

Binding

The copies of the thesis presented initially for examination must be spiral or gum-bound. The copy of the final bound thesis must be bound within boards with leaves permanently secured. The cover bears the title of the thesis, candidate's name, degree awarded and the date of submission. The spine bears the candidate's name, the degree awarded and the date of submission.

Examiners

- 11) The primary supervisor is responsible for organisation of the overall examination process and for checking that the candidate and examiners have been supplied with the information necessary for understanding their roles, the defined procedures, and for ensuring the timely completion of the examination process.
- 12) The Examinations Office is responsible for processing the submitted thesis and the subsequent Examiners' Report.
- 13) The examination of a PhD candidate involves at least two examiners, one external and one internal. The primary supervisor discusses with the Graduate Research Committee the choice of the external and internal examiners. The candidate is informed in good time when potential examiners and the overall make-up of the examinations board are being considered. At that stage, while providing a rationale for doing so, a candidate may object to the appointment of a particular examiner. If an examiner is recommended for appointment in spite of an objection from the candidate, a written rationale for the recommendation is supplied to the College.
- 14) Any member of academic staff who has appropriate expertise and experience may act as an internal examiner. However, the College in recommending examiners shall ensure that one of the internal examiners is a Professor. A supervisor other than a Professor may not act as an internal examiner for his/her student. If the Supervisor is a Professor, s/he may act as an internal examiner; in that case, a second internal examiner, who need not be a Professor, must be appointed. Examiners are nominated by the Head of School following recommendation by the Graduate Research Committee and are approved by the College, after submission of a completed 'Approval of Examiners Form' (EOG 010).

- 15) The external examiner shall have expertise in the field of study of the thesis. The external examiner shall not be drawn from within the NUI system, except, with the approval of Standing Committee, under clearly defined and exceptional circumstances, where the expertise required cannot readily be found elsewhere.
- 16) A second external examiner is appointed:
 - a) When the candidate to be examined is a full time member of staff of the University
 - b) When the work being examined, because of its nature, justifies this.
- 17) All examiners participate fully in the two stages of the process: (i) the examination of the thesis and (ii) the *viva* examination of the candidate.
- 18) Examiners must declare any potential conflicts of interest that they may have.
- 19) Normally, the supervisor attends the *viva*. S/he however, contributes to the process only on request from the external examiner or with his/her permission except where, as provided for under 14 above, s/he is an internal examiner. In cases other than provided for under 14 above, the candidate is consulted as to the presence of the supervisor and may choose to be examined in the supervisor's absence.

The Viva (Oral) Examination

- 20) The *viva* is arranged by the supervisor at a time suitable for the candidate and for the examiners. The *viva* should normally be held within two months of the submission of the thesis. The candidate is made familiar by the supervisor in advance with the standard format, timetable and normal length for such examinations in the relevant discipline.
- 21) Although some details of the examination procedures used may be defined in local guidelines, normally:
- 22) A preliminary short written report is prepared independently before the *viva* by each examiner.
- 23) The procedure for the *viva* is outlined to the candidate at the beginning.
- 24) As soon as is practicable after the *viva*, feedback is given to the candidate.
- 25) Prior to the *viva*, the examiners shall meet formally to discuss the implications of their preliminary reports and agree an approach and their respective roles in the examination. Any deviations from the normal mode of examination for the relevant discipline must be made clear and the candidate's consent obtained in advance. The external examiner normally leads the *viva* process.
- 26) Where the examiners are in agreement, they shall submit a joint report with a recommendation for award or otherwise of the degree (on Form EOG 030 'Report of the Examiners') to the Examinations Office.
- 27) Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports must be made, and all reports submitted together for consideration to the Academic Council Standing Committee. In accordance with the general regulations of the University, the opinion of an external examiner as to the overall result to be awarded to a candidate shall not be overruled unless by decision of not less than two-thirds of all the members of the Standing Committee then in office.
- 28) The report(s) of the examiners shall be submitted by the internal examiner to the Examinations Office within two weeks of the oral examination for consideration by the Standing Committee. Only reports that are received at **least ten days** prior to a Standing Committee meeting will be considered at that meeting.
- 29) Where the examiners have recommended that award of the PhD be conditional on corrections being made to the thesis, the primary supervisor is responsible for monitoring the implementation of these corrections, and the internal examiner(s) (in consultation with the external examiner if necessary) is responsible for ensuring that the changes made satisfy the requirements of the examiners.
- 30) The candidate shall not be allowed to graduate until the revised thesis, incorporating the required changes as confirmed by the internal examiner(s), has been lodged with the Examinations Office.
- 31) Where award of the PhD has been recommended and (where necessary) when the internal examiner has confirmed in writing that all the requirements of the examiners have been met, the candidate must submit a **hard-bound** copy of the thesis to the Examinations Office. That copy of the thesis will be lodged in the University Library. Candidates will complete a Library Submission Form (Form EOG 050) when lodging the hard bound copy of the thesis for the PhD degree. All theses shall remain the property of the University.