UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

SCHOOL OF HISTORY

Postgraduate Research Student Guidebook

Contents

Introduction

The following guidelines are provided to assist Research Students in successfully navigating their way upon the exciting and fulfilling journey that they have embarked upon as a postgraduate researcher within the School of History at UCD. Research Students are those students who are undertaking graduate studies (also referred to as postgraduate studies) by means of research towards completion of a major dissertation, be it an M.Litt (NFQ Level 9) or PhD Thesis (NFQ Level 10).

The normal duration of study for a research degree is as follows:

- PhD full-time: minimum 3 years, maximum 4 years
- PhD part-time: 6 years
- M.Litt full-time: 2 years
- M.Litt part-time 3-4 years

Within the School of History, general administrative responsibility for the M.Litt and PhD Graduate Research Programmes lies with the **Director of Graduate Studies (Research)** and the **School Administrator (Room K107).** The School Administrator will often be a first point of contact for Research Students in relation to matters such as admissions, registration, fulfilling the 30-credit taught requirements within the Graduate Research Programme, tutoring and the like, while the Director of Graduate Studies (Research) deals with matters such as admissions and Research Student progression within the Graduate Research Programme. But first and foremost, a Research Student's most essential connection with the School of History is through their **Principal Supervisor**.

1: The Principal Supervisor

1.1: Every Research Student is assigned a Principal Supervisor at the commencement of their studies. In some cases, a student may be assigned both a Principal Supervisor and a co-supervisor. This may occur where the research topic crosses over two or more disciplines, or where the Principal supervisor is an early career academic or is on a fixed term contract.

A research Student's Principal Supervisor is their primary and first point of contact throughout their time as a research Student in the UCD School of History.

1.2: Responsibilities of the Principal supervisor

The Principal Supervisor will:

- Be an expert and active researcher in the broad area of, or associated areas of, the Research Student's chosen research topic;
- Meet in person with and maintain communication with the Research Student on a regular basis throughout their studies for the purposes of supervision;
- Work closely with the Research Student throughout the time of their studies, advising them upon their research topic, the direction in which it is going, the nature and importance of relevant primary and secondary sources, and all other matters relevant to the successful completion of the dissertation;
- Read, comment and provide feedback on all written work carried out by the Research Student as part of their postgraduate degree;
- Provide any necessary letters of introduction to archives, complete any other necessary paper work and assist the Research Student in other related matters such as applying for scholarships, bursaries and other such concerns;
- Convene the requisite number of Doctoral Studies Panels / M.Litt Studies Panels **(see 2.1 below**) and prepare the Research Student for their Transfer Assessment Panel **(see 2.4 below)**.

2: The Doctoral Studies Panel [DSP] / M.Litt Studies Panel [MSP] and Transfer Assessment Panel [TAP]

2.1: Every Research Student is provided with a Doctoral Studies Panel [DSP] / M.Litt Studies Panel [MSP] at the time of commencement of their studies. The DSP / MSP comprises two or three members of academic staff within the School of History or from associated relevant disciplines and is tasked with providing support and advice to the Research Student and the Principal Supervisor throughout the time of the Research Student's studies at UCD.

In the normal scheme of things (health, family and other such matters permitting), for a full-time Research Student the DSP / MSP will meet twice in the first year and a third time at the beginning of Year 2, with the ensuing Transfer Assessment Panel [TAP] (**see 2.4 below**) taking place thereafter in the period between 12-18 months after the commencement of studies.

- **The first DSP / MSP** will occur early on, within the first 2-3 months of studies, in order to establish the research programme for the Research Student.
  - For the **first DSP / MSP**, a literature survey along with a thesis outline and any other appropriate preliminary materials should be submitted to the Research Student's Supervisor for consideration in advance of the meeting. The Supervisor may require the Research Student to also fill in a brief form highlighting elements of their research plan.
  - On completion of the DSP / MSP meeting, the Research Student is required to sign an agreed report of the meeting and their agreed research plan for the coming months. The report is countersigned by the Panel and the Supervisor. The report form's part of the Student's official record held within the School of History.

- **The second DSP / MSP** will take place around 8-9 months into the Research Student's studies, with a view to assessing research carried out thus far, and in order to make plans for the writing of a <u>draft chapter or other substantive piece of sample written work</u> over the ensuing four or five months which can then be reviewed by the third DSP /MSP meeting at the beginning of Year 2. As with the first DSP / MSP, a signed report is required as part of the student's official record within the School.

- **The third DSP / MSP** meeting at the beginning of Year 2 will focus upon assessing whether the Research Student and the draft chapter / 'Sample of Work' are ready for progressing to a TAP **(see 2.4 below)**. As with the first and second DSP / MSP, a signed report is required as part of the student's official record within the School.

NB: The TAP is not applicable to those students who are planning on completing an M.Litt only.

2.2: For a part-time Research Student the timetable for DSP / MSP meetings is as follows:

- First DSP / MSP: within the first 3-6 months.

- Second DSP / MSP: by month 16-18.
- Third DSP / MSP: by month 24-26 at the latest.

NB: The written and other requirements of part-time Research Students and the roles of Supervisors and the Panels for the DSPs / MSPs of part-time Research Students are the same as those outlined above for full-time Research Students.

2.3: Written work for submission to the third DSP / MSP:

The Research Student is required to complete a substantive 'Sample of Work' or draft chapter, which must be of a well-developed and polished nature, with a minimum required length of circa 8,000 words. The Research student and the Supervisor should ensure that the piece of written work adheres to the necessary styles and conventions regarding citation, structure, coherence and high editorial standard required of a dissertation (**see 4 below**).

- **NB:** While this written work may in some cases necessarily be of greater length than 8-15,000 words, the DSP / MSP will only focus upon a highlighted 8-15,000 word section or sections of that work, to be highlighted by the Research Student and the Supervisor at least a week in advance of the DSP / MSP meeting.

2.4: The Transfer Assessment Panel [TAP]:

The TAP is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies (Research) or the Head of School (or their nominee), with the two non-supervisor members of the DSP as panellists.

- The Supervisor must submit a written report to the TAP outlining the Research Student's progress to date and detailing the Supervisor's recommendation as to whether or not the Research Student should progress to stage 2 of the PhD programme.
- The Research Student must submit the draft chapter / sample of written work and a thesis outline (with proposed chapters) to the TAP, via the Supervisor.
- The TAP will assess whether the work submitted demonstrates that the topic is viable for completion of a PhD and whether the Research Student has demonstrated that they are ready and able to complete a PhD.
- On completion of the TAP, the Panel will recommend either that the Research Student progress to Stage 2 of the PhD, or that the Research Student continue to completion of an M.Litt at the end of Year 2 instead.

NB: The Chair of the TAP is responsible for ensuring the completion of the two reports required for submission to the College Graduate Board (inclusive of necessary signatures): These are as follows:

- **DOCTORAL PROGRAMME STAGE 1 TRANSFER ASSESSMENT REPORT** – This report is to be accompanied by the signed Supervisor recommendation report and a 200-word report on the TAP proceedings.
- **DOCTORAL PROGRAMME STAGE 1 TRANSFER ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATION**

2.5: For a part-time Research Student the TAP will take place within the first 6 months of Year 3. The written and other requirements of part-time Research Students and the roles of Supervisors and the Panels for the TAPs of part-time Research Students are the same as those outlined above for full-time Research Students.

2.6: Stage 2 DSP meetings:

Stage 2 PhD students are required to have at least one DSP meeting a Year in years 3-4 (Years 4-6 for part-time Research Students). The role of the DSP members in Stage 2 meetings is to ensure that in general terms the Research Student's progress is in keeping with normal expectations or to address any reasons why progress may have been hindered or hampered. For this purpose, the Research Student should provide a brief update / report on research and progress (2-3 pages maximum) for the DSP to consider and discuss at the meeting.

- **NB:** It is not normally the role of the Stage 2 DSP to read and comment upon substantive sections of the thesis. In exceptional circumstances, following prior agreement between the Research Student, the Supervisor, and the members of the DSP, a new chapter or chapters, or other substantive piece of written work, may be commented upon by the DSP members. Some such exceptional circumstances are as follows:
    - where the thesis has taken a dramatic and significant new direction since the TAP and therefore requires renewed input from the DSP;
    - where a particular chapter of section of work is of a highly specialised nature outside of the Supervisor's expertise and upon which a particular individual member of the DSP would be better able to comment and advise.

3. The 30-Credit taught requirement

Each Research Student is required to complete 30 credits of taught components within their Research Programme. All Research Students in possession on an MA degree receive an automatic award of 20 Credits in recognition of that degree. Research students can also earn a further 5 credits for tutoring within the School of History (HIS 41510).

All Research students must take two compulsory 5-credit modules within the School, as follows:

- HIS 50020 Introduction to Research and Writing (Semester 1)
- HIS 50010 Advanced Research and Writing (Semester 2)

Research Students may take further optional modules from level 4 taught modules, as directed by their Principal Supervisors. The School Administrator can assist Research Students in ensuring that they take the necessary modules and receive proper recognition for prior learning and tutoring as relevant for fulfilling the programme credit requirement .

4: Dissertation / Thesis Layout, Structure and Style

The Dissertation must be printed on one side of the paper only. It must also be as free from typographical errors as possible, and must be structured and written in a coherent fashion.

4.1: The following rules for Layout must be adhered to:

Margins: at the binding edge: no less than 30mm; other margins no less than 20mm.

Spacing: One-and-a-half line-spacing must be used, except for indented quotations and footnotes, where single spacing may be used.

Font: The recommended font must be a sans serif font (including Arial, Helvetica, Tahoma or Trebuchet) and must not be less than 11pt. Footnotes must not be less than 9pt.

Length: PhD Word Count: 80,000-100,000 maximum, including footnotes. Appendices are not included in the Word Count.

M.Litt Word Count: 50,000-60,000 including footnotes. Appendices are not included in the Word Count.

Pagination: Pages must be numbered consecutively throughout the text of the thesis using Arabic numerals, commencing at page 1 at the start of the introduction and running continuously thereafter to the end of the Bibliography. Preliminary pages (table of contents etc) must also be numbered consecutively, but utilising Roman Numerals, commencing at page i (lower-case throughout). Page numbers shall be right justified at the bottom of the page. If there is more than one volume, each volume shall carry its own pagination.

4.2: Contents of the Dissertation:

The Dissertation should include the following, in the order hereafter detailed:

4.2.1: *Preliminaries:*

Front Cover: **NB: For the final hard-copy version only (see 6.5 below):** the candidate name, the title of the Dissertation, the year and the degree award (M.Litt or PhD)

Title Page: All the following:
                        • The full title of the Dissertation and subtitle, if any
                        • The total number of volumes, if more than one, and the number of the particular volume

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- The full name of the author (followed, if desired, by any qualifications)
- The candidate's UCD student number
- That 'The thesis is submitted to University College Dublin in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of [Master of Literature / Doctor of Philosophy (as applicable)]'
- The School in which the research was conducted – i.e. The School of History
- Name of the Head of School
- Name of the Principal Supervisor (and Co-Supervisor were relevant)
- Names of the members of the MSP or DSP
- The month and year of submission

Table of Contents: Inclusive of Chapter Numbers and Headings / Titles, Appendices and Bibliography. **NB**: be sure to indicate on the right-hand side of the page the commencement page number for each such entry in the *Table of Contents*

- NB: A further listing of all other material in the Dissertation such as figures, tables, graphs, images, and so on should commence on a new page, immediately after the *Table of Contents*

Abstract: A short description of the Dissertation (circa 300 words)

Statement of Original Authorship:

'I hereby certify that the submitted work is my own work, was completed while registered as a candidate for the degree stated on the Title Page, and I have not obtained a degree elsewhere on the basis of the research presented in this submitted work.

Acknowledgements: As desired

List of Abbreviations: If required

4.2.2: *The main body of the Dissertation:*

The main body of the Dissertation – the substantive text – should be structured in the following fashion:

- Introduction
- Chapters
- Conclusion
- Appendices (if required)
- Bibliography

4.2.3: Citation:

The Dissertation **MUST** be Footnoted – **DO NOT** use endnotes. Footnotes **MUST** recommence from no. 1 at the beginning of each Chapter and in the Conclusion.

- NB: The School of History's default Citation / Bibliographical style is the same as that found in '*Irish Historical Studies*: Rules for contributors', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiii, no. 131 (May 2003), pp 351-68 (available on JSTOR also), or accessed as a PDF here: http://www.irishhistoricalstudies.ie/contact_us.php

4.2.4: Abbreviations:

Any source footnoted in the Dissertation should be given in full on first reference and thereafter abbreviated to a shorter though coherent form in second and all ensuing references to that source throughout the Dissertation.

- **NB:** Key sources that are used on numerous occasions throughout the Dissertation can be listed in an initial *List of Abbreviations* (**see 4.2.1 above**) at the beginning of the Dissertation. All references included in the *List of Abbreviations* are cited from the outset in the footnotes in their abbreviated form.

4.2.5: Chapters:

Chapters require chapter headings / titles as well as numbering, as follows:

Chapter 2:

Defining a Concept: Politics, 1703-5

4.2.6: Bibliography:

The Bibliography should list all sources used for the writing of the Dissertation. **DO NOT** include any sources that have not actually been cited in the footnotes in the Dissertation. The Bibliography should be divided up between Primary Sources and Secondary Sources, with relevant sub-divisions within those categories as necessary.

- Sub-categories might, for example, include 'Manuscript Primary Sources' followed by listings by Archival repository, followed by 'Printed Primary Sources' with further sub-divisions therein for government Papers; Private Correspondence; Pamphlets and Tracts, and so on.

5: Submitting the Thesis / Dissertation

The Thesis cannot be submitted without the prior written approval of the Research Student's Principal Supervisor. This applies to both PhD and M.Litt Dissertations. The Principal Supervisor's approval is signified via the signing of the **Research Degree Examination Form** (**see 5.2 below**).

5.1: Submission deadlines:

There are three deadlines for submission each year, in **January**, **May** and **September**. The specific deadlines for submission in any given year, and all further necessary information can be accessed at the following web page:

http://www.ucd.ie/students/fees/thesissubmission.html

- **Other Key UCD webpages / PDFs:**

    http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/gradthesis.htm

    http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/gradthesisr_po.pdf

5.2: Submitting the Thesis for examination:

The Thesis must be submitted for examination in soft-bound format.

- In the case of a **PhD**, three soft-bound copies of the Thesis are to be submitted to the **Student Desk, UCD Registry**, for examination purposes (four copies in the case of two external examiners being appointed to the *Viva Voce* panel).
- For the **M.Litt**, two soft-bound copies are to be submitted to the **Student Desk, UCD Registry**, for examination purposes.

The soft-bound copies of the Thesis must be accompanied by a completed **Research Degree Examination Form**, signed by the Research Student and the Principal Supervisor, who must also confirm that the student has satisfied the requirements of the programme, including any taught modules.

- The **Research Degree Examination Form** can be downloaded from the UCD website at: http://www.ucd.ie/students/assessment/thesis_forms.html

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6. The Examination

Both M.Litt and PhD Theses are examined by a panel of examiners.
- In the case of an M.Litt Thesis, the panel of examiners will comprise an External Examiner and an Internal Examiner, with the Internal Examiner also acting as the Chairperson.
- In the case of a PhD Thesis, the panel of examiners will comprise an External Examiner, an Internal Examiner, and a separate Chairperson.

The **External Examiner** is appointed from outside of UCD and must be a recognised expert in the area of research of the Thesis, and shall not normally have had any research or professional collaboration with the candidate or the principal supervisor within the last five years, and shall not have been a research student of the principal supervisor.

The **Internal Examiner** is normally a member of the academic staff of the University and must be an active researcher in the broad area of the thesis topic or in a cognate discipline.

The **Chairperson** of the PhD examination panel is normally the Head of School or his/her nominee. In the case of the School of History, it is the norm that Director of Graduate Studies (Research) fulfils the role of Chairperson for the majority of PhD examination panels. The Chairperson's role is to ensure that the *Viva Voce* (**see 6.4 below**) is conducted in accordance with UCD Regulations, that the PhD Candidate is fully aware of the nature of the process and its outcomes, and that all administrative matters and paperwork are completed accordingly.

6.1: The M.Litt Examination:

The examination panel read and report on the M.Litt Thesis, in normal circumstances within two months of the examiners receiving a copy of the Thesis. The Internal Examiner acts as Chairperson and ensures all of the necessary paper work is completed and submitted accordingly.

6.2: Potential outcomes of the M.Litt Examination:

The examiners may recommend any one of the following outcomes:

(a) Award the degree – no corrections required

(b) Award the degree – corrections required [minor typographical and grammatical errors - typically corrections to be carried out over 1-3 months]

(c) Award the degree – revision without re-examination [more substantive revisions and re-writing that would usually require 3-9 months of work]

(d) Revise Thesis and submit for re-examination [substantive re-working of the Thesis, that may require a year to 18 months of work]

(e) Do not award the degree – recommendation that the candidate transfer to an appropriate graduate programme

(f) Do not award the degree

6.3: The PhD Examination:

PhD candidates are required to have an oral examination of their Thesis, known as a *Viva Voce*. The *Viva Voce* examination will normally be held within two months of receipt of the Thesis by the examiners.

6.4: The *Viva Voce* exam:

The *Viva Voce* exam itself is carried out by the two examiners, with the External Examiner taking the lead. The *Viva Voce* will normally last for 1 to 1.5 hours, though can go on longer if necessary. The PhD Candidate should bring a copy of the Thesis with them to the *Viva Voce*.

- **NB:** On conclusion of the *Viva Voce*, the PhD Candidate will be required to leave the Examination Room, while the examiners and Chair confer on the final outcome of the *Viva Voce*. The PhD Candidate will then be recalled to the Examination Room and notified of the outcome and of any further requirements they may have to undertake.

6.5: Potential outcomes of a *Viva Voce*:

The examiners may recommend any one of the following outcomes:

(a) Award the degree – no corrections required

(b) Award the degree – corrections required [minor typographical and grammatical errors - typically corrections to be carried out over 1-3 months]

(c) Award the degree – revision without re-examination [more substantive revisions and re-writing that would usually require 3-9 months of work]

(d) Revise Thesis and submit for re-examination [substantive re-working of the Thesis, that may require a year to 18 months of work]

(e) Do not award the degree – recommendation that the candidate transfer to an appropriate graduate programme [i.e. M.Litt]

(f) Do not award the degree

6.6: Final Submission of the Thesis / Dissertation for award of the Degree:

Following successful completion of M.Litt examination / PhD *Viva Voce* and completion of any changes, corrections or revisions required by the examiners, the Research Student must submit a hardbound version of the Thesis along with a completed **Research Degree Submission Form** (the

Research Student must contact acce@ucd.ie for this form) and the **Thesis Correction Sign-Off Form** to the Student Desk, UCD Registry.

- The **Research Degree Submission Form** is completed by the Research Student
- The **Thesis Correction Sign-Off Form** is completed and signed by the Internal Examiner once they are satisfied that all of corrections required by the examiners have been successfully completed by the Research Student

As a courtesy, the Research Student usually presents a hardbound copy of the final Thesis to the Principal Supervisor as well. It is also a requirement of the University that the final version of the thesis be submitted as a pdf via the SIS Student Web system (please discuss this with your Principal Supervisor before uploading it).

7: Miscellaneous

Research Students should discuss the various matters listed hereafter with their Principal Supervisor before acting upon any of them.

7.1: Tutoring:

Research Students can apply for hourly paid work as Tutors on undergraduate modules taught in the School of History. The School runs workshops twice a year on Tutoring, while the University also provides courses on teaching techniques, skills, methodologies and so on.

Tutoring is an excellent way to get hands-on experience of teaching at University. Research Students can also earn credit for working as a Tutor. Tutoring can also help Research Students to contextualise their own research, and is a good way of getting to know your fellow Research Students. A dedicated Tutors Room is provided by the School for essay correction, meeting with students and other teaching-related administrative matters.

Calls for applications for Tutor positions are issued twice a year by the School of History's **Director of Tutorials** and the School's Administrator well in advance of the relevant Semester in which teaching will be required. Please look for such notices on the School notice boards / website.

7.2: Exam correction:

Research Students who undertake work as a Tutor may also be required to carry out paid examination correction at the end of the relevant semester in which they are teaching. The School's Examination Officer and the relevant module coordinators provide guidance and assistance to Tutors undertaking such examination correction and a percentage of the exam scripts graded by tutors are monitored by the relevant module coordinators.

7.3: Conferences:

A key component of the educational, academic training and research experience of a Postgraduate Student is the attendance at Academic Conferences and, on occasion (in consultation with their Principal Supervisor), the delivery of academic papers on their research to relevant conferences. Each year specialist conferences are organised on all aspects of historical research throughout Ireland and further afield. Notification of **Calls for Papers** (CFPs) and of conference programmes are regularly circulated through various media, be it notice boards in the History corridors or via email, websites, academic journals and the like. Specialist Societies also hold annual or biennial conferences, and it is incumbent upon Research Students to identify those Societies and conferences that are most relevant to their own fields of research. Their Principal Supervisor can advise them thereof in the first instance, but fellow postgraduate students and other members of staff can assist in this respect also. Very often word-of-mouth is the quickest way of finding out what is going on.

- **NB:** Postgraduate Research Students form part of the organising committee for the **Annual Joint UCD / TCD / DCU History Postgraduate Conference**. Research Students from all three University deliver papers at the conference, chair sessions, and attend as delegates at this conference. The annual conference is an important event for networking, developing your research, and advancing your research career
- The organising committee members from UCD are chosen from among senior postgraduate students in the School. Those interested in getting involved in the organising committee should contact the School's **Director of Graduate Studies (Research)**

7.4: Funding:

Funded Research Students: If your Scholarship includes funding for research expenses/equipment/ or other activities you must consult with your Principal Supervisor and with the history office (K107) on the correct procedures for accessing these funds prior to incurring the costs.