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UCD School of Information and Communication Studies Doctoral Handbook
PhD policies and procedures
This handbook acts as a guide to ICD PhD students, but students should also consult the *UCD Academic Regulations*, *Progression in Doctoral Programmes Policy*, *UCD College of Social Sciences and Law (CSSL) Staff and Student Guidance and Policy on Graduate Research Degree Programmes*, and the UCD Graduate School website for relevant information.

The ICS doctoral programme aims to provide an environment that enables creative, energetic, and internally motivated students to complete original research that makes a substantial contribution to knowledge related to information, communication, and/or library science. The Doctor of Philosophy in Information and Communication Studies achieves this by providing students the flexibility to select relevant modules to their field of study and work with research active supervisors in the field.

A. Admission

The ICS PhD programme seeks outstanding applicants with the potential to conduct original research through independent investigation.

Entry requirements

Applicants must have **one of the following:**

a. A minimum 2.1 primary degree (3.08 GPA) in any field of study; **OR**
b. A master's degree in information science, library science, communication studies or a related field.

These requirements can be demonstrated by submission of an official transcript for all previous academic work.

If you do not fully meet the second requirement above, you may be eligible for an MLitt research master's degree.

For non-native English speakers, an English language certificate is required: IELTS overall score of 6.5, with a minimum of 6.0 in each section.

Application

In addition to providing evidence of the above requirements, applicants must submit a completed application via the UCD Online Application system. No post or email applications are accepted. The online application asks you to complete the following as well as submit a current reume/CV:

1. *Applicant statement (500-1000 words)*
   a. Please provide <u>details of your proposed research</u> to include (a) aims, objectives and central research questions of the project, (b) how existing literature on the topic has been used to inform the proposal and (c) how the project will advance state of the art and make a contribution to existing knowledge:

   b. Please detail the <u>research design and methodologies</u> to be employed in carrying out your scholarship which should be described in sufficient detail to demonstrate your thorough understanding of the research topic:

2. *Personal statement (500-1000 words)*
   a. What are your career goals and how would obtaining a PhD in Information and Communication studies help you to achieve them?

   b. How will you go about acquiring the expert knowledge and transferable skills necessary for your professional development, e.g. technical skills, communication skills, analytical skills?

   c. How would the PhD degree enable you to gain skills relevant to employment outside the traditional academic sector?

3. *Additional information (300-500 words)*

   Please highlight any additional information which has not been included elsewhere in the application, e.g.:
   Why do you wish to pursue a higher degree by research?
   Why have you proposed this research topic?
   Why do you feel there is a specific demand for the skill set that you wish to build?
   Why are you particularly suited to this research field?
   Which of your attributes demonstrate your capability to be a good researcher, e.g. motivation, commitment, thirst for knowledge?

Applicants may also be asked to complete an **oral interview via phone/video-chat** with the PhD director (for the complete list of PhD Programme Director duties, see Appendix C) and proposed Principal Supervisor. During this interview, you will be asked about your proposed research project to assess your suitability for entrance into the PhD program, as well as potential overlap with research interests of the current ICS faculty. In order to identify potential supervisors, applicants are encouraged to view staff pages and a list of potential PhD research areas, listed on the School website.

B. Supervision

1. Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor will usually be an ICS staff member at the rank of Lecturer or above who has endorsed the admission of the applicant will serve as the potential student's academic supervisor. Such endorsement will include consideration of the applicant's academic background, the correspondence between the potential student's and the potential supervisor's research interests, and the ability of the supervisor and student to work well together.

According to UCD Academic Regulations 17.2,

The Principal Supervisor must be:
    1) a permanent member of the academic staff of the University; or

    2) a member of the adjunct or visiting staff of the University, who has been specifically approved to act as a Principal Supervisor by the University Programmes Board, on the recommendation of a School and with the approval of the Graduate School Board, and whose name has been entered on the Register of Approved Adjunct and Visiting Supervisors.

    3) a full-time member of the academic staff on a temporary contract of three years or greater may act as Principal Supervisor with the approval of the Head of School, provided that there is a Co-Supervisor, identified in advance of the student commencing their studies. The Co-Supervisor must be a member of the Doctoral Studies Panel and will assume the responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor in the event that the student's programme of study exceeds the duration of the initial Principal Supervisor's contract.

    4) Any request to appoint a Principal Supervisor who does not meet these criteria must be submitted as a derogation from this regulation and will be subject to the review and approval of the Academic Council Executive Committee.

According to UCD Academic Regulations 17.4, "A Principal Supervisor will be an active researcher in the broad area of the student's research topic, with a record of peer-reviewed publication of international standing, and will normally hold a doctoral degree."

The student or staff member may terminate a supervisor/supervisee relationship upon notice to the ICS PhD program director. A change in supervisor may be called for due to a change in the focus of research interests.

The student and supervisor should meet early in the first semester of the program to mutually set expectations for the supervising support to be provided during the first year of the program. Such meetings should occur at least annually, at the time of submission of the Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP), and as the student's needs evolve.

The Principle Advisor is responsible for supporting the student's progress in the PhD programme. While the ways in which an advisor might support a student will vary, it is recommended that a Principle Supervisor and student plan to meet one-on-one several times each semester. The Principle Supervisor is responsible for responding promptly to a student's request

for additional meetings. The student and Principle Supervisor and student will together set realistic goals for timing of submission of documents for feedback and the return of that feedback. Conversations between the student and Principle Supervisor may also include module planning (during the first two years of the programme) and meeting of degree milestones.

2. Doctoral Studies Panel (DSP)

A student's DSP will consist of the student's principal supervisor, as well as two additional advisors. In special circumstances, two members of the panel may be appointed "principal supervisors." The DSP will usually consist of two members of ICS staff and on occasion, a member of UCD staff outside of ICS. At the recommendation of the student's principal supervisor, a DSP member unaffiliated with UCD may be appointed a member of the DSP. At the recommendation of the student's principal supervisor, a DSP may consist of 4 members. A DSP must be assigned and recorded with the Graduate Studies Board of the College of Social Sciences and Law within 3 months of matriculation. Any changes to a DSP must be reported to the Graduate Studies Board of the College of Social Sciences and Law as soon as possible.

The student and the Principal Supervisor are encouraged to seek advice from other ICS Staff members in building a DSP, as well as developing the student's research.

The DSP is responsible for directing and advising the student in developing a focused research question, , conducting research and developing a question.

The DSP is also responsible for:
- Directing the student toward the appropriate literature.
- Suggesting suitable methodologies for data collection and analysis.
- Ensuring that the student is made aware of work that is not up to the required standards, before scheduling of progression milestones.
- Advising on aspects of presentation.
- Submitting documentation to private funders, if needed.
- Reading drafts of student work, and returning them in a timely fashion with comments and suggestions.
- Providing clarification of the standard of research that is expected for the relevant programme.

The first DSP meeting should take place within 6 months of the student's initial registration in the PhD programme. Panel meetings should be held regularly and they may be held more often at different stages of the research, particularly as the research programme is being focused and refined. In advance of every meeting, the student should submit written work to their Panel. Following each meeting, a formal record should be completed and signed, outlining what has been discussed and detailing any relevant activities that student or supervisor have undertaken to do for the next meeting. The PhD student will be responsible for completing and managing records of panel meetings. The Graduate Studies Board of the College of Social Sciences and Law recommends a minimum of two DSP meetings per acadmeic year.

The Graduate Studies Board of the College of Social Sciences and Law strongly recommends that all DSP meetings be recorded and reported using the RPDP template provided on the CoSSL website.

C. Student responsibilities
Accordng to 20.1-20.4 of the Academic Regulations, PhD candidates are responsible for:
1) Pursing the programme of research, study and personal and professional development prescribed by the supervisor (s) and to work with their supervisor(s) to meet requirements articulated in the Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP).
2) Fulfill all responsibilities that may be reasonably expected to progress and conduct their research, training and development successfully.
3) Comply with best ethical practice and the regulations, policies, and guidelines of the University to conduct their research.

In addition, PhD students and PhD candidates are reminded they are responsible for the following:
1) While the supervisor and DSP will provide students and candidates with help and guidence, the student/candidate is responsible for determining their topic and "teasing out" their research question.
2) Taking the initiative to contact DSP members and set up meetings when needed.
3) Sharing potential problems and issues with needed individuals as soon as possible.
4) Keeping a written record of DSP panel meetings (see template in appendix D and/or use the RPDP template).
5) Attend scheduled meetings with supervisor(s) and DSP members.
6) Submitting a rough draft of the thesis to DSP members before it is submitted to the Registry office.
7) Keep up to date with deadlines and submissions required for progression through the PhD programme.
8) Advance through the PhD programme in time required by the University (see appendix A).

D. Progression in the ICS PhD Degree Programme

Throughout enrolment in the PhD programme, the student is responsible for completing

Stage 1
During the first full academic year of the student's ICS PhD programme, the student will be expected to complete a proportion of taught modules, generic skills training and research training. The student will set this proportion with input from the Principle Supervisor and other members of the DSP.

In order to be elligible for transfer to stage 2 of the ICS PhD degree, students must complete the following:

1) Complete a minimum of **30 credits** of taught modules **including** IS 50080: PhD Skills (5 credits), chosen in consulations with the principal supervisor

2) **Submit** one of the following, in consulation with the principal supervisor:
   a. A book review to a peer-reviewed journal
   b. A poster to a peer-reviewed academic conference
   c. A presentation to a peer-reviewed academic conference
   d. An article to a peer-reviewed journal
   e. A chapter in a peer-reviewed monograph
   f. Other peer-reviewed venues are possible, with approval of the PhD Programme Director
3) Submitted completed annual RPDP reports to the DSP and PhD Director
4) Submit a research proposal including a completed literature review chapter, methods chapter and bibliography to the TSP for review

The DSP and PhD Programme Director will provide information on relevant calls for work that completes this requirement. Students will typically complete Stage 1 of the program between 12-18 months after entry to the PhD programme.

While it is recommended that students aim to submit more than one piece to an externally refereed venue, only one submission is required. This submission maybe independently or jointly authored.

Students will be reviewed annually in Stage 1 by all staff via an annual presentation of their work. In stage 1 of the programme, this 10-15 minute presentation is designed to prepare students for the TAP. In the early stages of Stage 1 of the programme, it is expected students will focus on relevant literature during this presentation vs. reearch design.

Preparation for Transfer to Stage 2 of the PhD Degree

Upon completion of the above, students may make a request to the PhD Programme Director to Stage 2 of the degree. A student should consult with their DSP and the PhD Programme Director to determine readiness for transfer to Stage 2 of the programme. **A DSP must be held between 12-18 month (full-time) or 18-24 month (part-time) after a student enters the PhD programme.**

In order to formally submit a request for transfer to Stage 2 of the programme, the student should submit to the PhD Programme director:

1) A written statement of progress from the student's Principle Supervisor.
2) Copies of the annual RPDP since the beginning of the student's time in the programme. A student will automatically be deemed as ineligible for transfer without submision of the annual RPDP reports.
3) A recommended list of 3 ICS Staff members to consist of the student's assessment panel.

4) Evidence of completed research modules and submitted original work, as listed above.
5) A research proposal (6000 words) including a completed literature review chapter, methods chapter and bibliography of the PhD Thesis. **This document must be submitted at least 2 weeks before a scheduld TAP.** In the instance that a second TAP is requested to be scheduled, the research proposal document must be <u>submitted a minimum of 2 weeks before</u> the schedule second TAP.

All documents should be developed with input from the Principle Supervisor.

Once this information is received, the PhD Programme Director will organize the Assessment Panel members and assessment date.

Transfer Panel Assessment Process

On the day of the assessment, the student will present a 10-15 minute presentation outlining the relevant literature, methods and proposed thesis research design proposed in submitted literature review chapter and methods chapter of the PhD Thesis. The presentation is meant to highlight the document, it is not a time to introduce new information or material. The assessment panel will then answer questions of the student related to the student's research proposal and progress in the programme.

The panel may also request to interview the student's Principle Supervisor, per rules stated in the *UCD Academic Regulations*.

The student will then be asked to leave the room and the panel will consult. The panel will make a decision and the student will be notified of the panel decision. While panels will attempt to notify the student of the outcome as soon as possible, panels may need time to deliberate. A formal report of TAP outcome will be provided to the student, supervisor and DSP within 1 week of the panel meeting.

The panel will conclude on 1 or 2 below:

1) that the student should progress to the next stage or year of the doctoral programme;
2) that the student should not progress to the next stage or year of the doctoral programme, and that:

   a. the student should re-submit for assessment within six months (with an indication of the month/year in which the subsequent formal assessment of progress will take place);
   b. the student should apply to transfer to another graduate programme utilising, where appropriate, any credits already accumulated within the doctoral programme; (typically, this will be the MLitt degree)
   c. a recommendation be made to the University Programmes Board that the student's registration be terminated.

If students wish to appeal the decision of the TAP, they are advised to consult the *Progression in Doctoral Programmes Policy.*

Stage 2 of the programme

Once a student has advanced to stage 2 of the programme, they are now considered a "doctoral candidate" rather than a "doctoral student." Stage 2 of the programme is largely dedicated to original doctoral research (level 5). On rare occasion, candidates may complete additional coursework if imperative to their completion of original doctoral research. If a candidate determines the need to complete additional taught modules, they should seek advice from their Principle Advisor, DSP and/or the PhD Programme Director.

In order to complete Stage 2 of the programme, candidates should **submit evidence of one of the following to the PhD Director**:

    1) An article to a peer-reviewed journal
    2) A presentation to a peer-reviewed conference
    3) A chapter in a peer-reviewed monograph
    4) Other peer-reviewed venues may be possible, with approval of the PhD Programme Director

While it is recommended that candidates aim to submit more than one piece to an externally refereed venue, only one submission is required. This submission maybe independently or jointly authored.

In addition, the candidate must provide all annual RPDPs to the PhD Programme director in order to organize an examination committee.

Students will be reviewed annual in Stage 2 by all staff via an annual presentation of their work. In stage 2 of the programme, this 15-20 minute presentation is designed to prepare students for the Viva Voce. In Stage 2 of the programme, it is expected students will present their literature, methods, research design and findings from their PhD Thesis work.

Preparation and Submission of PhD Degree theses for Examination

In preparation for the Viva Voce, a candidate will work with their DSP to identify Internal Examiners and an Extern Examiner. The Examination committee will be appointed by Head of School no later than 3 months before the candidate's thesis submission.

Examination Committee Chair

The Head of ICS will normally act as chair of the Examination Committee. In instances where the Head of School is the candidate's principal advisor or has been nominated by the candidate

as an internal examiner, the Head of School can nominate an ICS Staff member to serve as Examination Committee Chair. **The Chair will not move forward with the student's request to organize an Examination Committee until the PhD Programme Coordinator confirms that above requirements have been met.**

Internal Examiners

Working with their Principle Supervisor, the candidate will identify 1 internal examiner. Internal examiners will be active researchers in the broad area of the thesis topic or in a cognate discipline and must normally be a member of the academic staff of the University. As ICS is a small school, members of the DSP and/or Assessment panel are eligible to serve as internal examiners. However, the Principle supervisor may not serve as an internal examiner. Once the Internal Examiner has agreed to participate, the candidate will contact the Head of School to make the official nomination.

Extern Examiner

The Extern Examiner should be a recognized expert in the area of research of the thesis as evidenced in the curriculum vitae of the proposed extern examiner. Once the Extern Examiner has agreed to participate, the candidate will contact the Head of School, who will officially nominate the Extern Examiner to the College Graduate School Board who will seek approval of the Academic Council Committee on Examinations, who will recommend the extern examiner for appointment by the National University of Ireland.

Submission

The completed PhD thesis should be submitted to the UCD Registry, who will forward a copy to each member of the PhD Examination Committee.

***Viva Voce* Examination**

The *viva voce* will normally be held within two months of the receipt of the thesis by the examiners.

The chair of the Examination Committee shall arrange for preliminary reports from each examiner to be exchanged in advance of the *viva voce* examination.

When the examination is complete, the examiners shall report to the Academic Council Committee on Examinations, recommending whether or not the degree of PhD should be awarded. The Academic Council Committee on Examinations will decide, on the basis of the report(s) and where necessary clarification or correspondence with the examiners, to authorise or not authorise the award of the degree of PhD.

When the examination is complete, if all examiners are in agreement, on the nomination of the Chair of the Examination Committee, an internal examiner shall complete a joint Degree Report-on behalf of all examiners-on the academic standard of the thesis and the candidate's

performance in the *viva voce* examination. The Degree Report shall be approximately 500 words in length and which shall be submitted by the Chair of the Examination Committee to the Academic Council Committee on Examinations.

In writing their report, the examiners should bear in mind that the report will be considered by the Academic Council Standing Committee on Examinations and that not all of its members will be expert in the subject matter of the thesis. The report should include a brief description, in lay terms, of the work presented in the thesis and an outline of its principal conclusions. The report should include a brief assessment of the candidate's knowledge and comprehension of the background to the research topic and the work of other authors in related fields. The examiners should comment broadly on the strengths and weaknesses of the research and of the theoretical framework developed by the candidate in the thesis and at the *viva voce* examination. The quality of the presentation of the thesis should be mentioned.

It is important that there should be consistency between the opinions expressed in the report and the examiners' recommendation in relation to the award of the degree. For example, if several negative comments are included in a report which recommends the award of the degree, the examiners should take care to indicate the strengths of the work which outweigh its weaknesses and which persuaded them to recommend that the degree be awarded.

The report shall include a recommendation to:

    a.   Award the PhD degree – no corrections required
    b.   Award the PhD degree – corrections required
    c.   Award the PhD degree – revision without re-examination
    d.   Revise thesis and submit for re-examination
    e.   Do not award the PhD degree – recommendation that the candidate transfer to an appropriate graduate programme
    f.   Do not award the PhD degree

For more information about roles of the Examination Committee, please see the UCD document *Guidelines for PhD Examiners.*

For a description of types of recommendations (unanimous vs. not unanimous), please see 22.7.1-22.7.3 of the Academic Regulations.

Appeals

A candidate may appeal a decision of the Academic Council Committee on Examinations on the award of a PhD to the Academic Council Committee on Assessment Appeals.

Submissions of Revised Theses

Where the PhD Examination Committee has not recommended and the Academic Council Committee on Examinations not authorised the award of PhD, the candidate may submit a revised thesis for re-examination subject to the conditions set out by the Academic Council

Committee on Examinations. Submission of a revised thesis requires a statement from the supervisor(s) that the thesis has been revised under their supervision.

Candidates are advised to consult with UCD Academic Regulations and the Assessment office on submission of their final thesis.

Flow chart of progression through ICS PhD programme

Student responsibilities
PhD Program Director Responsibilities

Appendix A. Progression in School of Information and Communication PhD Programme

Admission Stage

- Application package completed (transcripts, 500 word proposal, interview)
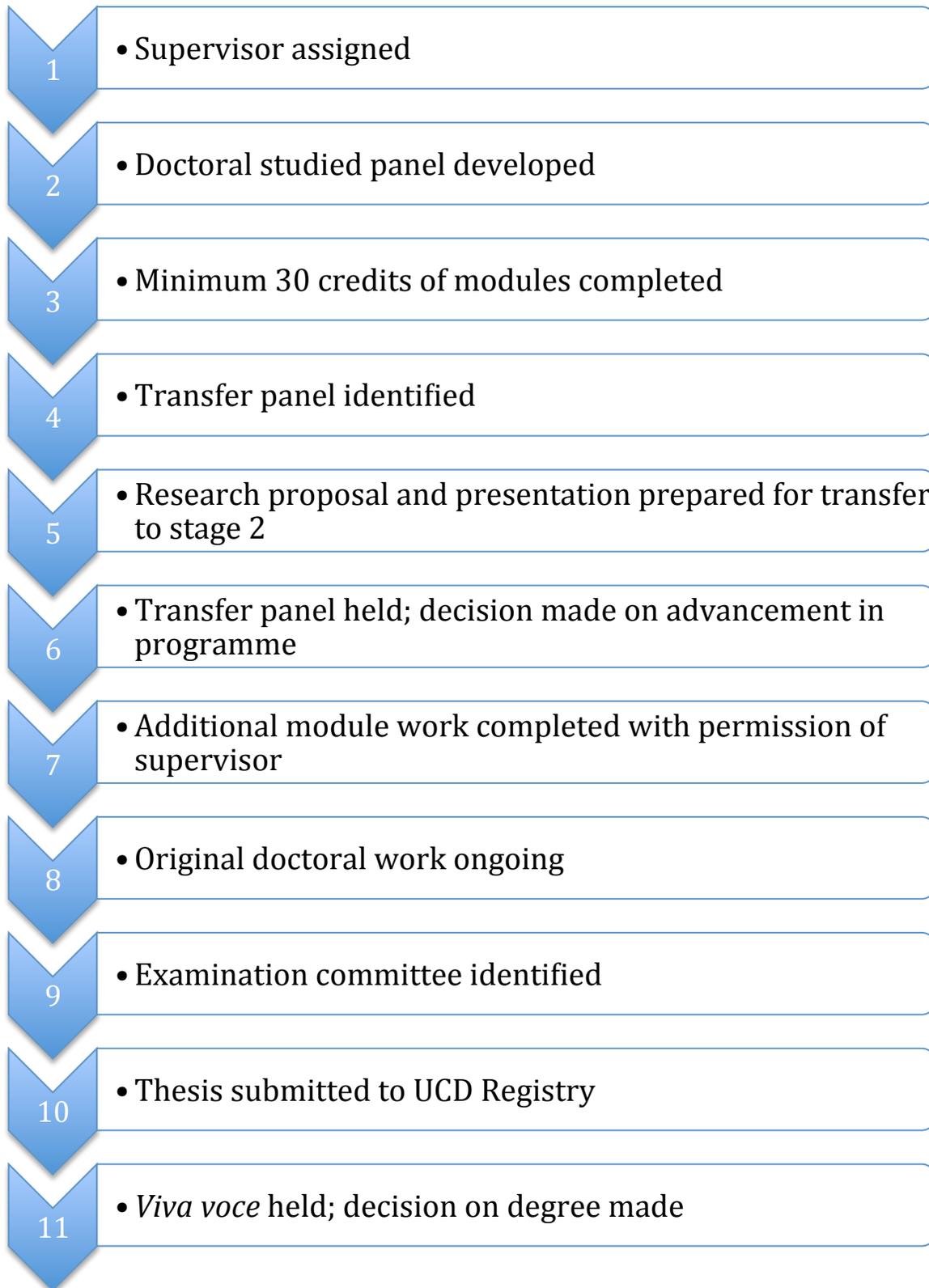- Official acceptance from UCD
- Supervisor assigned

Stage 1 (1-18 months FT/ 1-27 months PT)

- Doctoral studies panel (DSP) developed
- Complete at least 30 credits of taught modules
- Submit at least 1 piece of work to an externally refereed venue
- Develop research proposal and panel for transfer to Stage 2
- TAP held

Stage 2 (12-48 months FT / 18-60 months PT)

- Complete additional modules with permission of supervisor
- Submit at least 1 piece of work to an externally refereed venue
- Develop, conduct, analyze and complete thesis
- Identify Extern Examiner and Examination committee no less than 3 months before thesis submission
- Submit thesis and notify Head of School of Submission
- Examination committee chair schedules *viva voce* no more than 2 months after submission of thesis
- *Viva voce* held-degree decision made

Appendix B. Chronology of Information and Communication PhD Programme

1 • Supervisor assigned

2 • Doctoral studied panel developed

3 • Minimum 30 credits of modules completed

4 • Transfer panel identified

5 • Research proposal and presentation prepared for transfer to stage 2

6 • Transfer panel held; decision made on advancement in programme

7 • Additional module work completed with permission of supervisor

8 • Original doctoral work ongoing

9 • Examination committee identified

10 • Thesis submitted to UCD Registry

11 • *Viva voce* held; decision on degree made

Appendix C. Duties of the PhD Programme Director

1. **Admission of PhD Students**
    The PhD Programme Director serves as the first point of contact for applicants interested in applying to the ICS PhD degree. The Director will respond to applicant inquires and facilititate Supervisor and student matches. The Programme Director will also conduct oral interviews with applicants, along with the supervisor and other interest ICS staff. The Director will present applicant packages to ICS staff, so that an admissions decision can be made by the entire ICS team.

2. **Submission of Official documents associated with the PhD programme**
    The Director will complete necessary Department and University documentation and processes to asist a student in progression through the degree. This includes but is not limited to
    -Scheduling of Transfer Assessment panel
    -Completion of documentation to transfer from stage 1 to 2 in the programme
    -Documentation to nominate the Examination committee

    The Director will also ensure that the student submits all required documents, or evidence thereof, to progressthrough the programme, including receiving the annual RPDP. The Director will set the date for annual submission of the RPDP form. The Director will ensure that all student files are kept up to date.

3. **Official Ombudsman for PhD students**
    The Director will act as official Ombudsman for the Phd students and SILS Staff. When a dispute assises between a student and supervisor, the Director will attempt to assist in the identification of an ameanable solution to both parties.

4. **Other Unofficial duties**
    The director will complete additional ad hoc and unofficial duties as assigned by Head of School or self eveloped. For example, the Director may conduct events and activities to facilitate the expereince of students and staff involved in the PhD programme.

Appendix D. Template for student record of DSP panel meetings

Name:

Student Number:

Supervisor:

Date

Individual in attedance:

Notes from meeting:

Action items resulting from meeting:

Student signature:

DSP member signatures:

Appendix E. Internal PhD Progress Report
This template is suggested, but not required. It can be used by a supervisor as they see fit, but does not replace the required annual RPDP form.
Name:

Student Number:

Thesis Title:

Supervisor:

Part I: *To be completed by the student*

1. What progress have you made on your thesis since your last progress report?

2. What do you plan to accomplish between now and the next progress report deadline?

Part II: *To be completed by the supervisor*

1. What progress has the student made since her/his last progress report?

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____
                               (m/d/yr)

Student's Signature: _____

Appendix F. PhD Recommended Timeline

30 credits taught modules
Transfer assessment panel (TAP)
Complete thesis
Viva voce

Full-time

Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6

Part-time