



**UCD Registry  
Assessment**

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**Clárann UCD  
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## **PhD Regulations and Guidelines (pre 2006 entrants)**

The following Regulation applies to students who entered the Ph.D Degree programme prior to the current session.

### **Guidelines for Admission and Supervision of PhD Candidates**

*These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Academic Council Regulation 4 and be construed as recommendations for procedures that may be additional to those explicit in the regulations*

### **Entry requirements and application procedures**

#### **Application**

Suitably qualified graduates and intending graduates may apply for admission to UCD's PhD programme at any time; applicants from outside the EU who may require a visa to study in Ireland should make application well in advance of their intended start date.

Applicants for admission to the PhD programme should, in the first instance, approach the staff member under whose supervision they wish to study and carry out research, the Professor of the subject or the Head of the School in which the research will be pursued. Details of the research interests of Schools and individual members of staff are to be found in the Postgraduate Prospectus or on UCD's web site <http://www.ucd.ie>

#### **Admission**

The intending supervisor should consult the Professor of the subject and the Head of School (if all are not the same person) and should agree on the suitability of the candidate and the topic *before* the application is forwarded to the College for approval. In particular, the Head of School should have given agreement to provide appropriate School resources (both space and facilities).

The Offices of the Registrar and the Vice-President for Research are currently setting up a database on PhD students (linking the Research Information System to Banner) which will contain comprehensive information on each student, including academic history, registration, research topic, supervisor(s), funding, publications, internal and external examiners, thesis submission date, award date and conferring. Applicants will be required to complete an application form which will supply the applicant's personal details, as well as the title of the proposed project, supervision arrangements and other information required to set the student up in the database. A provisional title for the thesis may be used at time of application. The final title should be submitted for approval to the College and Academic Council when the extern examiner is nominated.

Before the application is submitted to College for approval, the Head of School, nominating professor and the supervisor will be required to sign the form, recommending the applicant for admission. The Head will also sign the application committing the resources required for the project, and indicating any anticipated



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shortfall in resources which might limit the scope of the research.

In order to streamline the admission procedures for PhD students, the Academic Council has recently delegated the approval of PhD (and other postgraduate) admissions to the Faculties and has recommended that each College should put in place procedures to facilitate and expedite the approval process.

Recent changes in national legislation impact on selection procedures for the admission of candidates for PhD (and other postgraduate) programmes. The Freedom of Information Act requires the university to provide reasons for decisions taken by the university which materially affect an individual, such as an applicant to a postgraduate programme. The Equality Acts require the university to treat applicants with equity and not to practice unfair discrimination; applicants who perceive that they have been treated unfairly may make a complaint to the Equality Authority.

Faculties and Schools which make decisions on the admission of postgraduate students should ensure that selection procedures and criteria are fair, reasonable and consistent and that they conform to any published procedures and criteria. The procedures employed and the criteria on which selection is based should be documented. The assessment of each applicant against the criteria should be documented, and the reasons why each applicant is considered to be qualified or unqualified for admission should be clearly stated. Where the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of places available, the applicants should be ranked against the selection criteria, and qualified candidates who are not selected should be placed on a (ranked) waiting list.

Particular care should be exercised where there is competition for funded research studentships; procedures should comply with the Personnel School's guidelines on recruitment, i.e. the positions should be advertised, shortlisting and interviews should be conducted by a gender-balanced panel, preferably including a colleague external to the School. Candidates should be scored against transparent criteria and weightings which should conform to any published criteria.

### **Registration**

It is important that PhD students should be formally registered with the university at all times while they are carrying out research. It is recognized that the period of nine terms is a minimum requirement and Schools should approve the use of resources and facilities for a more realistic period of 4 to 5 years. It is recommended that each College should draw up guidelines to define the circumstances in which a reduced period of study might be approved. Each case should be forwarded for approval by the Academic Council or the Examinations Standing Committee.

If, for any reason, a PhD student must interrupt his/her research for a prolonged period, the Registrar, in consultation with the supervisor and the Head of School, can grant leave of absence for a period of one or more semesters.

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**Supervision of Research and Preparation of the Thesis**

The supervisor will be the staff member named as supervisor in the candidate's application for admission, and any change in arrangements for supervision should be approved by the College. Where Faculties so wish, other staff member/members may be appointed as advisors to the candidate. This second person can mediate in the event of a dispute and can be available for appointment as a thesis examiner. Some Schools insist on joint supervision or a supervisory committee.

If it is known before the commencement of study that the research is to be carried out in any location other than the home School of the candidate, it is recommended that approval for the use of facilities in other locations be obtained before the candidate is accepted. This applies whether the other locations are within the University or elsewhere. If the candidate will spend significant periods of work at another institution, it is recommended that a supervisor also be appointed from that institution.

A retired member of staff may continue to supervise PhD candidates, provided that the College approves joint supervision with a full-time permanent member of staff.

Where there is more than one supervisor, it is important that one supervisor, who must be a full-time permanent member of staff, should take responsibility for monitoring the candidate's progress and for signing off the thesis (see below).

It is recommended that, at the start of a Ph.D. programme, the candidate be made fully aware of what is expected of him/her. Regular times for consultation with the supervisor should be determined. The supervisor should make regular assessment of the candidate's progress and it is recommended that a short annual progress report be prepared for the Head of School.

It is recommended that each College review the appropriate arrangements for monitoring progress of research work in its particular discipline and for resolution of any conflicts which might arise between supervisors and candidates. If satisfactory progress is not being made, the candidate must be informed in writing and realistic targets set for him/her. If the candidate is unable to meet these targets, he/she may be asked to withdraw from the Ph.D. programme. Such termination must be approved by the College and Academic Council. It is recommended that at least one other member of staff of the School be requested to act as an assessor in such cases.

Full time PhD students are expected to complete their research within six years. Alternative arrangements will apply to candidates who are permitted to register for part-time PhD programmes.

**Submission of the Thesis for Examination**

The Assessment guidelines on the format of the thesis are to be found later in this booklet. Individual Faculties may prepare supplementary guidelines if it is considered appropriate. Otherwise, a candidate should adhere to the Assessment guidelines.

The Academic Council has agreed, in order to facilitate any corrections to the thesis



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required by the examiners, that candidates may submit softbound copies of the thesis for examination. However, the degree will not be awarded until a hardbound copy of the thesis, corrected if required by the examiners, is submitted Assessment.

The thesis submitted for examination must be accompanied by a form (available from the [Assessment](#)) signed by the supervisor confirming that the thesis has been prepared under the signatory's supervision. This requirement is to prevent candidates from submitting a thesis without the supervisor's approval. Such theses are rarely approved by the examiners and may bring the candidate, the supervisor and the university into disrepute.

Should the candidate wish to appeal against the withholding of approval, this appeal should be made via Assessment to the Academic Council Standing Committee on Examinations, who may form a small appropriate subgroup to advise on the matter. During holiday periods, the appeal process may be decided by the Registrar.

Custom and practice varies from one discipline to another in relation to publication of material from a thesis. In the sciences and other experimental disciplines, before the thesis is submitted a candidate will be expected to have published in peer-reviewed journals a number of articles based on the research work reported in the thesis. In other disciplines, it is more usual for the research to be published after the examiners have approved the thesis. Supervisors should encourage their PhD students to present the results of their research at international conferences and to publish their work-in-progress in international peer-reviewed journals.

However, supervisors should also bring the university's policy on Intellectual Property to the attention of PhD candidates and should alert them to the implications of publishing any experimental findings or discoveries which might be patentable.