

UCD School of Politics &
International Relations (SPIRe)



Handbook for Research Students
(MLitt and PhD)

Introduction

For our new arrivals, welcome to the UCD School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe), and for the others, welcome back!

Most of the relevant information that you will need can be found in the College of Social Science and Law Graduate School Handbook

https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/CSSL_ResearchDegrees_Guidance_Aug_17.pdf.

This brief document points out any differences in the SPIRe programme and/or additional information specific to SPIRe.

On the PhD program, SPIRe collaborates closely with the Department of Political Science in Trinity College Dublin (TCD). We currently share the quantitative courses which means that the Quants II module in Semester 2 will be taught by TCD colleagues on the TCD campus and in some courses at UCD you will be joined by PhD students from TCD. We would also encourage you to consider including TCD PhD students in your own initiatives, both academic and social.

While studying at UCD, you will notice that there are fellow PhD students in a large variety of different specializations within SPIRe, as well as on specialized thematic PhDs that cross various disciplines. Within SPIRe we have students working on British-Irish studies, European studies, political theory and human rights, development studies, nationalism and ethnic conflict, et cetera. Across disciplines, our school is involved in thematic PhD programs such as Quantitative Social Science, European Law and Governance, Global Human Development Studies, and Complex Systems and Computational Social Science. The course requirements for these students differ, but overlap with those in SPIRe itself.

If after reading this handbook you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone listed under contact details below.

Dr Stephanie Dornschneider

SPIRe PhD Programs Director

Program structure

SPIRe's PhD program spans four years for full-time students (it is allowed, but not typically feasible, to finish within three years). For part-time students, the course is five to seven years.

The program consists, in addition to writing the PhD thesis (approximately 80,000 words), of substantial coursework in research methodology and substantive areas in politics and international relations. Furthermore, primarily through the Graduate School of the College of Social Sciences and Law (CSSL), additional courses and workshops are available to help you with your thesis and professional development.

The MLitt program is a 15 month program – 31 for part-time students – and includes at least 20 credits from the PhD taught modules plus the remainder in the form of a thesis (approximately 20,000-40,000 words).

SPIRe Seminar Series and PhD Workshop

UCD SPIRe organises a bi-monthly seminar series for all staff and graduate students in the school. Attendance at these seminars provides an excellent opportunity for you to learn more about presentation skills by looking at how others present, to learn about what research takes place across the school, and to practice your own skills in providing constructive feedback in academic workshop settings. For these reasons, this is a core requirement of the PhD program and all students with supervisors in SPIRe are expected to attend all seminar sessions.

In addition to the seminar, there will be a workshop session scheduled at the end of each semester where first and second year PhD students will present their work. All PhD students with supervisors in SPIRe will be required to present at these workshops at the end of their 2nd and at the end of their 3rd semester. The first of these two presentations can potentially take the form of presenting your research design; the second should take the form of a proper academic research presentation, i.e. either a paper or a chapter of your thesis. These presentations are required for transfer to Stage 2 (see below for further detail on the transfer process).¹ For each presentation, one of the academic staff members of the school will be assigned as discussant.

After the transfer to Stage 2 of the PhD program, during the 3rd year of the program for full-time students, all students will be required to present once at the regular weekly seminar series, which will form part of the assessment for the Thesis Workshop module (see below).

Note that participation in these seminars is not only excellent preparation for professional conference attendance, it is also crucial in your preparation for your job presentations interviews, especially if you intend to apply for academic jobs after the PhD program.

Coursework

SPIRe PhD students in Politics and International Relations must complete 50 credits of coursework, at

¹ Note that this is to be implemented gradually: students who started their studies in the 2014-15 academic year are required to present once prior to transfer and once in the regular seminar series; those who started in 2013-14 are only expected to participate in the regular seminar series; those who started before that should have already fulfilled the necessary requirements for the taught program.

least 40 of which should be completed by the time of the transfer to Stage 2, which takes place after approximately 18 months on the program.² Of these 50 credits, 30 will be devoted to required methodologically oriented courses, one on research design, one on quantitative methods, and one on qualitative methods; the remaining 20 required credits (and any additional credits beyond 50) can be filled with modules/courses selected in consultation with your supervisor. There is a wide range of modules available throughout the University. The CSSL Graduate School also offers a range of both taught PhD modules and PhD professional training workshops.

<http://www.ucd.ie/socscilaw/graduateschool/informationforcurrentphdstudents>

An overview of the SPIRe PhD courses available this year are appended to this document. The core modules must be completed by all PhD students on the Politics & International Relations program. For students in political theory, an exemption from either quantitative or qualitative methods is negotiable, to be replaced with a more appropriate methods module in UCD.

Progress assessment

Students on the PhD program in Politics and International Relations are required to participate in assessments of their progress at two points.³ The first comes in March of the first year (assuming a September start), when students are required to submit a research outline and a piece of written work to their DSP. Just before approximately 18 months on the program, PhD students will have their Transfer Assessment in order to progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2 PhD status (for part-time students it is 18-27 months), as required by UCD regulations. This involves submission of substantial pieces of written work, a full statement of research design and thesis progress, and a plan of work for the remaining period of the research degree.

It is your responsibility to liaise with your supervisor to set up mandatory DSP meetings. The following formal meetings with the DSP are required as a minimum:

Initial meeting	You should meet your DSP by the middle of the first semester, to become acquainted with them, and to give you access to the additional expertise to support your work.
6 month meeting	The purpose of convening this committee is to ensure that students have a viable proposal and viable research timetable. If a student is to complete within three-four years then it is essential to ensure the project is defined at an early stage. By 1 March in their first year, students must submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Detailed research proposal (approximately 2500 words);•Detailed work schedule;

² Please note that these requirements are for SPIRe PhDs in Politics and International Relations. If yours is a thematic PhD program hosted in SPIRe or elsewhere, please contact the relevant program director for taught requirements.

³ Students on other PhD programs with SPIRe supervisors should check whether their program has a formalized process in place for transfer assessment. If not, it is recommended that you take part in the same process in SPIRe. Please do alert the PhD Program Director at least a few months before the process takes place.

- Some piece of substantive work, for example a literature review or methodology section (up to 5000 words).

12 month meeting Second DSP meeting to take place no later than 12 months from the student's enrolment date. The DSP must have received and reviewed one chapter of the student's thesis before this meeting.

Copies of DSP reports (with all signatures) should be submitted to Dara on a timely basis.

18 month meeting **TRANSFER ASSESSMENT: STAGE 1 to STAGE 2 PhD**

The purpose of this meeting with the School's nominated Transfer Assessment Panel (TAP) is to provide a detailed and rigorous check on the student's progress and the quality of their work. The submission and TAP meeting will take place before you reach 18 months on the programme. For this transfer assessment:

- The student must have completed 40 credits of coursework, including all core modules, with a minimum of B grade on average.
- The following documents must be submitted to the TAP:
 - One piece of substantive written work which will comprise either a draft chapter or a draft paper. For those who apply to the Irish Research Council (IRC) for a grant (see below), a copy of the grant application will suffice as one of the two pieces.
 - An updated research proposal/work plan briefly stating the core research problem, relevant research questions, and research strategy, and including a detailed chapter structure and work plan (for as far as not covered by the inclusion of an IRC application). For those who apply to the Irish Research Council (IRC) for a grant (see below), a copy of the grant application will satisfy for this component and a short additional memo explaining thesis structure and planning will suffice
 - A copy of the student's latest transcript.
 - A formal written recommendation from the Supervisor based on the advice of the DSP.

The School's Transfer Assessment Panel will, after careful review of the the documentation and a meeting with the candidate, make one of the following recommendations to the College Graduate School Board:

- Resubmission of revised materials at a later date, with a time line agreed between the DSP and the TAP.
- Transfer to Stage 2 of the PhD program.
- Transfer to another graduate program, utilizing, where possible and where appropriate, the credits accumulated.
- Termination of the registration with a certificate for any modules for which credit has been awarded.

The recommendation will have to be formally agreed by the GSB and any proposed transfer to another program will have to be agreed with that program.

Funding opportunities

SPIRe Fund

SPIRe has a very limited amount of money available to fund participation by its own postgraduate research students and postdoctoral researchers in Irish and international conferences and summer schools each year.

The amount of the grant is up to €250 for any single request and includes travel, accommodation, registration fees and subsistence. Applications will be reviewed tri-annually by the UCD SPIRe Research Committee and funding calls will be communicated via the SPIRe e-mail ListServ. Guidelines and the application form are available on the 'PhD Policies and Forms' section of the SPIRe website:

<http://www.ucd.ie/spire/study/currentphdstudents/phdhandbookandfaqs/>

General information

Term dates

Please note teaching dates for TCD modules differ substantially from those in UCD. You should consult the TCD website for further information.

For term dates, see <http://www.ucd.ie/students/keydates.htm> – note that the TCD term in 2017 starts later than that in UCD, on 25 September. For this reason, all modules that are specifically for the PhD program (i.e. those with POL 5xxxx module codes) in the first semester will start in the week of 25 September to make sure the TCD participants can start from the beginning as well. However, the TCD Semester 2 terms begins earlier than UCD, on 15 January so all POL 5xxxx modules will begin the week of 22 January.

Of key importance to keep an eye on are the deadlines for the different submissions in the PhD program. These vary depending on when you start and what type of program you are on, resulting in the following overview. The overview assumes that September starts start in 2015, January starts in 2016 – if you are from an earlier cohort, you will have to translate accordingly – i.e. if you started in 2013, you subtract 2 years from each year mentioned.

September 2017 start		
	Full-time	Part-time
1 st workshop presentation	May 2018	December 2018
2 nd workshop presentation	December 2018	May 2019
Stage 2 transfer submission deadline	15 January 2019	15 June 2019

Research Space

G315 is the school's PhD and Visiting Researcher's room. 15 places will be allocated to PhD's at the beginning of the year on a lottery basis. They are available to full-time students only. An allocated space will be available to the student for the duration of his/her studies up to 4th year. It has wireless connectivity, some desktop computers, and space for working on laptops. Graduates are responsible for the upkeep of this room and 'House Rules' will be circulated to occupants. The School Board Room at G316 is also available to graduate research students – please contact Dara Gannon for information and availability.

Research students may apply, with the School's support, for a workspace in the College of Social Sciences and Law research student rooms or in UCD Geary Institute. Space in these locations is limited and most spaces are allocated to full-time students, but the School will endeavour to ensure that all research students who need workspace on campus will be accommodated. You will receive notification regarding room availability from the Graduate School Manager, Margaret Brindley, just after the beginning of the teaching term.

Subject to the opening hours of the building you will have access to these rooms at all times via the key code lock. Do not divulge this code to anyone outside of the School. The rooms have a valuable collection of equipment. Please ensure that the door is kept locked when unoccupied. In addition, the last person to leave in the evening should ensure that the equipment is switched off and the wall sockets are also switched off.

School office

The School's PhD Administrator is Ms. Dara Gannon, who is available to provide administrative advice and information to all research graduate students (contact details at the end of this document).

Computer, photocopying, fax and other facilities

Please consult with the PhD administrator about access to photocopying and printing facilities.

Library

When you register with the University, you will be given a UCD student card. This also acts as your Library card. You will need your card to enter and exit the James Joyce Library. A UCARD system has been recently introduced which provides an electronic purse for making purchases within the University.

UCD Library (<http://www.ucd.ie/library/>) now has access to a vast range of online journals and electronic databases, many of them accessible from remote locations as well as on-campus. A dedicated information session will be arranged for SPIRe research students during the first semester.

ALCID

This is a co-operative scheme between a group of participating Irish university libraries, which enables postgraduate students (Doctoral, Masters by research and by exam) to have access and reference rights to the stock of participating libraries. The library of Trinity College Dublin is particularly useful as it is a Copyright Library and contains a wide range of books, journals and other publications.

You can apply for an ALCID card at the Information Desk in any UCD Library or download the application form:

<https://www.ucd.ie/library/use/visitlibs/>

ILL – Inter Library Loans

Many publications not available directly from the Library are obtainable via the Inter-Library Loan Service. This service is available to all staff and registered students of the College and to registered external borrowers. Staff and students are charged €6.00 per application. Journal articles from branch libraries can be obtained for readers on payment of €2.50. The online request form can be accessed via <https://librarysso.ucd.ie/illb> SPIRe has a limited amount of funding available to assist PhD students with inter-library loans. This can be accessed on a case-by-case basis by contacting the PhD administrator, Dara Gannon.

Irish Research Council

The Irish Research Council (IRC) is usually an important source for funding for research students. A maximum duration of a grant is usually three years. Since we have a three to four year program, your development of the research proposal in the first year is an excellent chance to also develop a proposal to submit to the IRC for funding during the remaining three years.

Contact details

For matters related to your PhD, the following contacts are most important:

PhD Director

Dr Stephanie Dornschneider

Stephanie.dornschneider@ucd.ie

Room F320

Administrator, PhD Program

Ms Dara Gannon
dara.gannon@ucd.ie
Room G314

Administrator, Graduate School

Ms Margaret Brindley
margaret.brindley@ucd.ie
Room D111

Director, Graduate School

Dr Enda Murphy
enda.murphy@ucd.ie

Head of School

Prof David Farrell
david.farrell@ucd.ie
Room G313

PhD Modules: Semester One, 2017-18

UCD term starts 11 September, 2017

TCD term starts 25 September, 2017

[POL 50070 Quantitative Methods I \(CORE\)](#)

Dr Thomas Chadeaux

Tuesdays: 4-6pm

Please note: The first Lecture will be on Thursday 28th September. The schedule will revert to Tuesdays for the second lecture onwards

TCD, Room 3020, Arts Building

10 credits

[POL 50200 Qualitative Research Methods \(CORE\)](#)

Dr Eva Wegner

Wednesdays: 12pm-2pm

First Lecture: 27th September 2017

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 41960 Comparative European Legislatures](#)

Dr Cristina Bucur

Fridays: 1pm-4pm

First lecture is on 6th October. Lectures will be of three hours duration in October and 2 hours in Nov/Dec

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 40370 International Political Economy](#)

Assoc Prof Samuel Brazys

Thursdays: 1pm-3pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 41030 Theory of Human Rights](#)

Dr Graham Finlay

Mondays: 11am-1pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 41650 The Global Political Economy of Europe](#)

Dr Aidan Regan

Tuesdays: 11am-1pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 41950 Public Opinion and Politics](#)

Dr Caroline McEvoy

Thursdays: 4pm-6pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

PhD Modules: Semester Two, 2017-18

UCD term starts 22 January, 2018

TCD term starts 15 January, 2018

[GSHS 50080 Social Science Methodology \(CORE\)](#)

Dr Johan A. Elkink

Thursdays: 2pm-4pm

First Lecture: 25th January 2018

UCD, Newman Building, Room E003 (Geography)

10 credits

[POL 50050 Quantitative Methods II](#)

Dr Johan A. Elkink

Fridays: 1pm-4pm

First Lecture: 26th January 2018

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 41640 Research Design and Case Study](#)

Dr Cristina Bucur

Tuesdays: 11am-1pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 40160 Comparative Public Policy](#)

Prof Niamh Hardiman

Fridays: 4pm-6pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 40140 International Political Theory](#)

Dr Alexa Zellentin

Wednesdays: 4pm-6pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 41660 Principles of International Politics](#)

Dr James Cross

Mondays: 11am-1pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits

[POL 40540 Comparative European Politics](#)

Professor Niamh Hardiman

Fridays: 11am-1pm

UCD, Newman Building, Room G317

10 credits