

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! This handbook should provide you with the necessary information to pursue your studies at our School. Since we are continually making improvements to our research degree programs, the structure and requirements are evolving over time. This handbook will provide you with the information useful for the 2013-2014 academic year.

This handbook is designed to answer your basic questions about the school's and university's requirements and procedures for graduate study. For more information about the school and its staff, I recommend that you start by browsing the SPIRe website. In addition, the following websites offer more information about [college](#) and [university-level](#) regulations and services for graduate students:

<http://www.ucd.ie/humansciences/graduateschool/>

<http://www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies/>

A recent development in SPIRe has been increased cooperation with the Department of Political Science in Trinity College Dublin (TCD). We currently share a few PhD courses and are developing further cooperation for the coming years. This means for you that some of the courses you will take will be taught by TCD colleagues and in some courses at UCD you will be joined by PhD students from TCD.

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 and Global Human Development Studies. 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 Andy Storey
SPIRe PhD Program Coordinator

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MLitt program

The School's MLitt program is a 15 month program for full-time students (September to December), which includes courses on research design, substantive courses, and writing an MLitt thesis based on original research. For part-time students, the program spans 31 months (September to June).

SPIRe recommends that 20 credits are devoted to course-work and 100 credits to the thesis. For available courses, see the PhD program below.

Thesis submission

Three copies of the thesis (approx 20,000-40,000 words), bound in accordance with the guidelines published by the Examinations Office, each accompanied by a document containing a summary of the contents of the thesis not exceeding 300 words, should be submitted, with the examination fee, to the Examinations Office, UCD. One further copy should be submitted directly to your supervisor. The MLitt will be examined by an Exam Board in accordance with the University's regulations.

PhD program

SPIRe's PhD program spans three to four years for full-time students. The program consists, in addition to writing the PhD thesis, of substantial coursework in research methodology and substantive areas in politics and international relations. Furthermore, primarily through the Graduate School of the College of Human Sciences (CHS), additional courses and workshops are available to help you with your thesis and professional development.

Coursework

SPIRe PhD students¹ in Politics and International Relations must complete 60 credits of coursework, at least 40 of which should be completed by the time of the transfer to Stage II, which takes place after 12-18 months on the program. Of these 60 credits, 30 will be devoted to required methodologically oriented courses, one on research design, one on quantitative methods, and one on qualitative methods; 10 will be reserved for a third year PhD Thesis Workshop. The remaining 20 required credits (and any additional credits beyond 60) can be filled with modules/courses selected in consultation with your supervisor.

SPIRe PhD students in European Law and Governance must complete 40 credits of coursework and 30 of these should be completed at the time of transfer to Stage II. **As core modules for**

¹ Please note that these requirements are for SPIRe PhDs in Politics and International Relations. If yours is a thematic PhD programme hosted in SPIRe or elsewhere, please contact your programme director for taught requirements

students taking this course may vary to those in Politics and International Relations, please consult the SPIRe website <http://www.ucd.ie/spire/phdstudies/phdeuropeanlawgovernance/>

An overview of the SPIRe PhD courses available this year are presented below, with core requirements highlighted. These must be completed by all SPIRe PhD students. For students in political theory, an exemption from either quantitative or qualitative methods is negotiable.

Course Provision	TCD Courses Start 23 September 2013	UCD Courses Start 9 September 2013
SEMESTER ONE Research Design (CORE)		POL 50160 Research Design (Dr Jos Elkink) Wednesdays: 2-4pm UCD, Newman Building Room G317 (Starts Week 3) 10 credits
SEMESTER ONE Quantitative Methods I (CORE)	POL 50070 (TCD Code: PO7001) Quantitative Methods I (Prof Tom Louwerse) Wednesdays: 9am-12pm TCD, Room 2 College Green 10 credits	
SEMESTER TWO Methods for Qualitative Research (CORE)		GSBL50050 Approaches and Techniques in Qualitative Research (Prof John Geary) Wednesdays: 2-5pm. UCD, College of Business & Law, Carysfort Ave, Blackrock Room N202 7.5 credits
SEMESTER TWO Comparative Public Policy		POL 40160 Comparative Public Policy (Dr Niamh Hardiman) Fridays: 4-6pm. UCD, Newman Building. Room G317 10 credits

SEMESTER TWO Quantitative Methods II		POL 50050 Quantitative Methods II (Dr Jos Elkink) Tuesdays: 9-11am. UCD, Newman Building. Room G317 10 credits
SEMESTER TWO PhD Thesis Workshop (CORE) (Stage 2, Third Year PhD requirement)		POL 50150 PhD Thesis Workshop Time, Venue and Lecturer TBC 10 credits
SEMESTER TWO European and International Governance		POL 50020 European and International Governance Time, Venue and Lecturer TBC 10 credits

*Please note that the above details are subject to change. Confirm with your module coordinator or the PhD administrator prior to the first class.

Either in consultation with your Supervisor/DSP or as part of a thematic PhD programme, other modules may be assigned. Please consult with your supervisor or programme director, bearing in mind that for the SPIRe PhD programme, a minimum of 60 credits is required, with 40 of those credits required before transfer to Stage 2. You may wish also to avail of modules in other Schools, Colleges or even outside the University. All of this may be accommodated within your PhD – subject to agreement with your supervisor and/or thematic PhD director.

The [College of Human Sciences' Graduate School](#) offers a range of both taught PhD modules and PhD professional training workshops.

PhD thesis workshop

This 10-credit module is required for all third-year PhD students enrolled in the UCD School of Politics and International Relations. As the capstone of the taught component of the PhD programme, its purpose is two-fold: to help students make the jump from research design and data-gathering to writing actual thesis chapters, and to help them improve their research presentation skills. Some class sessions are devoted to the challenge and techniques of writing a doctoral dissertation, and others to the presentation and discussion of draft chapters from students' theses. All students in the workshop are also required to present a paper to the school seminar at some point in the following semester.

Supervision

Each PhD student will be working with a primary supervisor as their main point of academic contact. In addition to the supervisor, at least two other academics will form the Doctoral Studies Panel (DSP). A formal meeting with your DSP should take place at least once each semester. The SPIRe Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) has responsibility for deciding on students' progression between stages (see below) and the kind of degree they may be permitted to apply for. Its recommendations are formally notified to the College of Human Sciences Graduate School Board (GSB). Although this is primarily your supervisor's responsibility, make sure that a DSP is decided on as soon as possible. You can also suggest members of the DSP to your supervisor when you feel you could use a particular type of expertise for your thesis.

It is important that you see your supervisor on a regular basis if you are to benefit from the supervisor-student arrangement. The duration and regularity of such meetings will depend to some extent on the nature of your research and your academic progress. You should agree with your supervisor the frequency with which meetings should take place. It is also important that you prepare in advance for prearranged meetings and that you keep any appointments that have been made. You are also expected to meet all deadlines and to submit work on time. You should consult your supervisor about any difficulties, academic or personal, which may be affecting your studies. You will normally receive written feedback on written work you submit. For your own benefit, you should make a written record of all meetings as well as the substance of any discussions you have about planning and developing your work. All of the above can be accommodated with the judicious use of your Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP) – see below.

Your supervisor's role is essentially to give advice, help and encouragement so that you receive a good training in research and produce a successful thesis. The thesis is, however, your own work, and you must accept that responsibility.

You will be assigned to a supervisor when you first enroll. In order to establish a good working relationship, you and your supervisor should agree at the outset how to proceed and what each of you expects from the other. Your supervisor will explain to you what kind of guidance you can expect to receive from him or her, and you in turn must ensure that you know exactly what

your supervisor expects of you. If you are not sure about your respective responsibilities, you should ask your supervisor for clarification. If you wish to change supervisors, please contact the PhD Program Coordinator.

Research and Professional Development Plan

Research and professional development planning is an integral part of the structured PhD programme at UCD. The purpose of such planning is to ensure that your work is clearly focused on achieving your research and professional goals. This will play a major part in informing the trajectory of your PhD research and in your training and development as a researcher. Your plan will also be a useful resource when it comes to writing up, and it will help you develop key skills which will be invaluable for both your current research and your future career prospects. You will find details and documents related to the RPDP via the following link:

http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/human_sciences%202009%20interactive%20master_enabled.pdf

Progress assessment

PhD students in SPIRe are required to participate in assessments of their progress at two points. 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. Then either in October/November or February/March of the second year, PhD students will have their Transfer Assessment in order to progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2 PhD status, 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. A completed IRC scholarship application may count as one piece of substantive written work – please consult your Supervisor/DSP.

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 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 (ca 2500 words)•Detailed work schedule•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 Doctoral Studies Panel must have received and reviewed one chapter of the student's thesis before this meeting. The PhD Coordinator will expect to receive a report from the DSP/student pair regarding the progress of the student after this meeting.

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. Within 12-18 months of joining the programme:

- The student must have completed 40 credits, including all core modules
- The following documents must be submitted to the TAP:
 - Two pieces of substantive written work which will comprise either two draft chapters or a draft chapter and a completed IRC application. If the former, these may but need not be planned as chapters of the thesis itself
 - 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
 - A copy of the student's latest transcript
 - A formal written ecommendation from the Supervisor based on the advice of the DSP
- Minimum B (minus) average from module coursework

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 the materials at a later date, with a time line agreed between the DSP and the Transfer Assessment Panel
- Transfer to stage two of the PhD programme
- 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 programme will have to be agreed with that programme.

30 month meeting The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the candidate is progressing sufficiently, is on schedule to submit on time and to iron out any remaining problems. There is no required length of written work that must be submitted at this stage, but it is envisaged that all members of the DSP will have seen significant portions of a draft by this stage.

Conference attendance

Graduate Research and Innovations Fund

Research students are actively encouraged to take part in national and international professional associations, to present their work as soon as possible at conferences, and eventually to seek to publish their work in high-quality academic outlets. Your supervisor will advise you in these matters.

To enable you to present your work at conferences, or to acquire further professional training, you may apply to the competitive College of Human Sciences' Graduate Research and Innovations Fund (GRIF). At least two calls for applications under the GRIF are made each year (October and April) for grants of between €100 and €1000. More information can be found on the CHS website:

<http://www.ucd.ie/humansciences/graduateschool/graduateresearchinnovationfund/>

SPIRe Fund

For those who are unsuccessful in obtaining GRIF funding, 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 each grant varies depending on the venue of the summer school or conference where the paper is going to be delivered.

- For Ireland-based conferences and summer schools (North or South), the maximum award the student can apply for is €250
- For overseas conferences and summer schools (Britain, other Europe, and beyond) the maximum award is €500

Please note that the grant is designed to contribute toward travel and subsistence expenses as well as registration fees. Receipts should be promptly submitted on return, including a certificate of attendance in the case of summer schools.

Presentation of a paper (in case of conferences) is a required condition for eligibility to apply, though not a guarantee of funding.

Applications to the SPIRe fund can be made in November and May, once the results of the GRIF applications are made public.

You will need to submit the following documents:

- A letter outlining the purpose of the conference, the reason why you wish to participate, and the way you expect it to benefit your research
- A letter of support from your supervisor
- An abstract and title of the paper, name and venue of the conference or summer school
- A preliminary breakdown of costs
- Evidence that you are making use of other funding opportunities, if such opportunities are available (for example, ECPR Joint Sessions, APSA Annual Conference, etc.)

If your application is successful, you will need to present receipts to claim the amount granted.

Thesis submission

Upon completion of the research, the candidate should prepare a thesis, with the advice of the supervisor/DSP and in accordance with the guidelines published by the University and those provided by the School, and should submit the thesis for examination. The candidate must be registered as a student at the time when the thesis is submitted for examination.

The required number of thesis hard copies (the student is required to submit a copy for each member of the examining committee. This can range between 3 and 5 copies), bound in accordance with the guidelines published by the Examinations Office, each accompanied by a document containing a summary of the contents of the thesis not exceeding 300 words, should be submitted, with the examination fee, to the Examinations Office, University College Dublin. One further copy should be submitted directly to your supervisor.

A paper-based dissertation (as opposed to a manuscript-type dissertation) consists of at least three single-authored papers of publishable quality in an internationally peer-reviewed journal, of which at most one can be replaced by two co-authored papers. In any co-authored paper at least half of the work must be certified as having been completed by the PhD candidate. In addition, a paper-based dissertation must include an introduction, a literature review / theoretical chapter that embeds the thesis papers in the wider literature, and an overall conclusion. Additional papers can be either single- or co-authored.

Examination process

The thesis is sent to internal and external examiners, the latter being internationally-recognised experts in the subject matter of your thesis. The Examiners undertake a preliminary examination of the thesis. It is the policy of the University that every PhD candidate is then examined orally by the board of examiners. The objectives of the *viva voce* examination are to provide an opportunity for the examiners to clarify any issues of fact which may have arisen in examining the thesis, to test the candidate's knowledge of the thesis topic and related areas of research and, as far as possible, to establish the originality of the candidate's work and ideas. The *viva* also provides an opportunity for the candidate to elaborate on aspects of the research which may not have been included in the thesis and to defend the arguments presented and the ideas developed

in the thesis.

Where the examiners are in agreement, they submit a joint report to the University indicating their opinion on the quality of the thesis and of the research on which it is based, and recommending whether the degree should, or should not, be awarded. The examiners also indicate whether, in their opinion, the thesis, in whole or in part, is worthy of publication. Award of the PhD is not recommended by the examiners unless they consider that the thesis, in whole or in part, is worthy of publication as a work of serious scholarship. The report also indicates whether, in the opinion of the examiners corrections to the thesis are required, and, if so, may assign responsibility to the internal examiner to ensure that such corrections have been made to the thesis before award of the PhD is approved by the University.

UCD Term dates

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

Semester 1

Teaching term	9 September 2013 – 29 November 2013
Exams	9 December 2013 – 20 December 2013
Christmas break	23 December 2013 – 1 January 2014
Semester 1 Grade Approvals Process	2 January 2014 – 17 January 2014

Semester 2

Teaching term	20 January 2014 – 7 March 2014
Progress to Stage 2 deadline (2nd year students)	1 April 2014
Proposal deadline (1st year students)	1 March 2014
Fieldwork / study period	10 March 2014 – 23 March 2014
Teaching term	24 March 2014 – 25 April 2014
Revisions	28 April 2014 – 4 May 2014
Exams	6 May 2014 – 17 May 2014
Semester 2 Grade Approvals Process	19 May 2014 – 30 May 2014

General Information

Attendance

A research postgraduate degree requires a very different approach to that which is involved in tackling an undergraduate or taught postgraduate degree. Self-motivation and discipline are key requirements. One and a half years is a short time in which to complete a Master's by research and 3 to 4 years is tight for a PhD, therefore students are required to approach their work in a professional manner.

All members of the University community are expected to behave responsibly at all times, to observe and abide by the Regulations of the University, and not to engage in an activity which might bring the good name of the University into disrepute.

Accommodation

Research students may apply, with the School's support, for a workspace in the College of Human Sciences 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 just after the beginning of the teaching term.

The School's graduate resource room is G315 and you may work there. It has wireless connectivity, some desktop computers, and space for working on laptops. Graduates are responsible for the upkeep of this room. The School Board Room at G316 is also available to graduate research students –please contact Dara Gannon for information and availability.

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 school office staff about access to photocopying, fax 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](#) 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 [ALCID Reader Ticket Application Form](#).

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, which is administered as a voucher system. Vouchers are available for purchase from the Information Desk Level 1 (James Joyce Library) or the Information desks in the branch libraries. Journal articles from branch libraries can be obtained for readers on payment of €2.50. 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.

Academic rules and conventions

Policy on dignity and respect

UCD is committed to the promotion of an environment for work and study which upholds the dignity and respect of the individual and which supports every individual's right to study and/or work in an environment which is free from any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The University recognizes the right of every individual to such an environment and requires all members of the University community to recognize their responsibilities in this regard. For further details, see the [UCD Student Handbook](#)

Ethics in research

UCD maintains the highest standards of integrity in its research activity. Ethical standards are given paramount importance in the University's Research Policy and Strategy and imbue its research culture: "All research should be conducted within an ethical framework consistent with the traditional principles of academic freedom". **All graduate research is covered within UCD ethics policy and all research must either obtain UCD ethics approval or formal exemption from [UCD ethics approval](#).**

UCD's existing structures to promote and promulgate ethical research practice, emphasizing integrity and rigour, seek to sustain a culture in which the following general principles are understood and observed; honesty; openness; leadership and cooperation; supervision and training; guidance from professional bodies; best practice in the ownership, recording and storage of primary data samples; best practice in publication.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. All your exams and papers, including your thesis, must be your own work and all quotations from other sources, whether published or unpublished, must be properly acknowledged. Plagiarism is a very serious offence and, when proven against a student, may result in disqualification from the examination for their degree and exclusion from all future examinations of the University. Some joint work is permitted, provided it is properly acknowledged as such. For further information regarding what constitutes plagiarism, see the UCD library website where you can download a [Guide to Plagiarism](#).

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 IRCHSS for funding during the remaining three years.

Contact details

An overview of all SPIRe staff and their contact details can be found [here](#):

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

PhD Program Coordinator	Dr Andy Storey andy.storey@ucd.ie Room G307
Chair, Graduate Studies Committee	Dr Niamh Hardiman niamh.hardiman@ucd.ie Room F305
Administrator, PhD Program	Ms Dara Gannon dara.gannon@ucd.ie Room G314
Administrator, Graduate School	Ms Margaret Brindley margaret.brindley@ucd.ie Room G209
Director, Graduate School	Dr Enda Murphy enda.murphy@ucd.ie
Head of School	Prof Ben Tonra ben.tonra@ucd.ie Room G313

In addition, for specific queries you might consider contacting the following advisors (see UCD website for contact details):

Academic problems	Your supervisor Your DSP
Disability	UCD Disability Support Services www.ucd.ie/disability
Enrolment and registration	Ms Dara Gannon Ms Margaret Brindley UCD Registry

Equipment and facilities	www.ucd.ie/registry SPIRe Administration Office (G310)
International students	UCD International Office www.ucd.ie/international
Examination arrangements	Your supervisor Ms Margaret Brindley
Financial difficulties	Financial Information Services, contacted through the Senior Student Advisor, Student's Union
Graduation	UCD Conferring Unit www.ucd.ie/confer
Layout, binding and submission of thesis	UCD Examinations Office
Personal difficulties	Your supervisor PhD Program Coordinator Head of School UCD Student Advisors www.ucd.ie/advisers UCD University Chaplaincy www.ucd.ie/chaplaincy UCD Student Health Service www.ucd.ie/stuhealth UCD Student's Union www,ucdsu.ie Niteline www.ucd.ie/niteline 1800 793 793
Supervisory problems	Your supervisor Your DSP PhD Program Coordinator Chair, Graduate Studies Committee
Tuition fees	UCD Fees and Grants Office www.ucd.ie/fees

