

MLitt/PhD Programme Handbook

UCD School of Economics

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The most recent version of this document will always be available on the PhD Shared Google Drive.

Overview

This set of guidelines is specific to the MLitt/PhD programme, School of Economics, University College Dublin (UCD) and is to be used as an addendum to the UCD Graduate Student Research Handbook, which can be accessed [here](#). Students should also review the Academic Regulations, [here](#).

In this document you will see our MLitt/PhD programme breakdown by year. The following timings are for students whose intention it is to leave UCD with a PhD.

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Contents

Year 1 of the Programme (MLitt phase)	3
Enrolling in Modules.....	3
What do I do if I fail a module?	4
What Grades do I need to get onto the PhD Register?.....	4
Supervision in the MLitt Phase	4
Supervisor Meetings.....	5
Year 2 of the Programme (PhD phase)	6
Applications for the IRC Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship	6
Year 3 of the Programme (PhD phase)	7
Years 4 and Beyond (PhD phase)	9
Thesis Examination	10
Participation Throughout the Programme	13
Tutoring	13
Research Visits/Internships	13
Awards	14
Further Information	14
Finances and Letter Requests	14
Help and Advice	15
Student Advisers.....	15
UCD Student Counselling Service	16
Leave of Absence	16
Withdrawal	17

Year 1 of the Programme (MLitt phase)

At the beginning of the programme, all students are enrolled on the MLitt register.

During the first year of the programme, full-time students will take four modules in the autumn trimester and four modules in the spring trimester, for a total of eight modules. (six 10 credit and two 2.5 credit modules)

In the Autumn trimester, students take:

ECON505750 PhD Microeconomics 1 (10)

ECON50740 PhD Macroeconomics 1 (10)

ECON50710 PhD Econometrics 1 (10)

ECON50750 PhD Workshop 1 (2.5)

In the Spring trimester, students will take:

ECON50720 PhD Microeconomics 2 (10)

ECON50730 PhD Macroeconomics 2 (10)

ECON50580 PhD Econometrics 2 (10)

ECON50760 PhD Workshop 2 (2.5)

In other words, students take a complete two-module sequence in each of the three core subject areas of microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics. In addition, in the autumn and spring trimesters students will attend the weekly School of Economics research seminar and the weekly seminar for PhD students (PhD Workshop), where PhD students in later years present work in progress.

Enrolling in Modules

To enrol to modules, students should complete the module registration form provided by the Graduate Studies. Information on this can be found [here](#). All of our MLitt students follow Method B to enrol on modules. A student cannot be retrospectively registered to or withdrawn from a module, so please complete the form in a timely manner. An email from the Graduate Administrator will be sent out to all students with further instructions shortly before Registration commences.

Part-time students may take additional time to complete the 6 modules. Note that the two modules in each subject are taught in sequence, such that the first module in a subject is designed to be taken before the second. For example, students should take PhD Microeconomics 2 after they have completed PhD Microeconomics 1. We strongly encourage that both modules of a subject should be taken within the same academic year.

What do I do if I fail a module?

Students who fail a module should organize a resit exam with the instructor; this exam must be taken by the end of the following trimester. If students pass the resit exam (after failing the module), they receive a grade of D- for the module.

What Grades do I need to get onto the PhD Register?

Students must pass all modules and attain a GPA of at least 3.4 across the 60 taught credits. If they fail to do so, they will not be able to continue onto the PhD year but will be allowed to remain and complete the MLitt. (The PhD Workshops are Pass/Fail only and as such are GPA neutral, but a Pass is still required.) If a student doesn't want to complete the MLitt, but has passed all modules, they can exit with a Graduate Diploma.

Supervision in the MLitt Phase

While the MLitt Phase focuses on the taught modules, students should still be thinking ahead to their PhD Phase. Students and their supervisors will set up a research studies panel (RSP) within three months of the start of the programme. At this time, the student has to inform the PhD coordinator and Graduate Administrator about the composition of the RSP. Typically, the RSP comprises of the supervisor(s) and two advisors (one of whom will act as the Chair). The purpose of the RSP is to support and enhance the supervisor-student relationship, to monitor progress over the course of the doctoral studies, and to provide advice and support both to the student and to the supervisor. One of the nominated advisors will have academic expertise relevant to the student's research work and have experience in supervising doctoral students. It is possible that one or both advisors are from other schools or even other institutions.

The RSP should have a first, informal meeting by the end of the first trimester. At least one additional meeting should be held in the first year of the student's registration, typically after the second trimester results are released. During this, the student can either present their Research and Professional Development Plan for the PhD phase, or for Year 2 of the MLitt, if they are not transferring. At this stage, if appropriate, the RSP can discuss if a change of supervisor and/or RSP members is necessary, based on the student's research plan.

Thereafter, it is expected that students will have two RSP meetings per academic year. Post-Stage Transfer Assessment, this may be reduced to one per year. Students should be pro-active in arranging such meetings in conjunction with their supervisor. The student, or another member of the RSP, may convene a meeting of the panel at any stage if it is considered desirable or necessary to address any relevant issue(s) that may arise.

Supervisor Meetings

It is important that a student has regular meetings with their supervisor, as per the Academic Regulations. Meetings can be recorded on InfoHub; however, it is the students responsibility to keep an accurate record of all meetings.

Year 2 of the Programme (PhD phase)

PhD students in Year 2 are expected to present their work once, in either the autumn or spring trimester, in the weekly seminar for PhD students. The length of the presentation will vary based on the number of students enrolled in the programme and the time that the student has been enrolled in the programme. Students will be given more detailed information on the expectations for the presentations at the start of the trimester. Moreover, students are required to attend the PhD Seminar and the School of Economics research seminar.

Applications for the IRC Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship

PhD students who are receipt of a scholarship from the School of Economics are required to apply for the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship by the Irish Research Council (IRC) in Year 2 of the MLitt/PhD programme (for funding starting in Year 3), but all PhD students are encouraged to apply. The application process should start no later than early September. Students should check the deadlines on the IRC webpage. Typically, the deadline is in mid-October. If an application is unsuccessful in Year 2, students are required to apply again in Year 3 of their PhD (for funding starting in Year 4) if they are still eligible to apply. Students may also apply for IRC funding in Year 1 of the MLitt/PhD programme (for funding starting in Year 2). Information can be found [here](#).

Year 3 of the Programme (PhD phase)

PhD students in Year 3 and above are expected to present their work at least once per academic year in the weekly PhD seminar.

All students are required to undergo a transfer assessment in order to move from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the PhD programme. Stage 1 is an initial period of advanced education, training, and research. Stage 2 is largely dedicated to carrying out a body of original, publishable research required for the award of a PhD. To transfer to Stage 2 students are assessed by a Transfer Assessment Panel (TAP) who will make a decision as to whether a student has made sufficient progress towards completion of their PhD research. The TAP will be convened by the School and will include at least three members of academic staff; however, it will not include supervisor(s). At the discretion of the School, a supervisor may be present in a purely observational capacity. Stage Transfer Assessment will take place during the first six months of Year 3. This time frame equates to the university requirement of completing the TAP between 12-18 months 12-18 after transferring from the MLitt to the PhD program (full-time) or 18-27 months (part-time).

In order to progress to Stage 2 of the PhD programme, economics students must have completed 60 credits of taught modules at the time of assessment, including all core modules, with a B average grade (GPA of 3.4) across modules undertaken. It is also recommended that students complete the [Research Integrity Training](#) before the Stage Transfer Assessment. (It must be completed latest prior to submission of the final thesis.)

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.
- 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 the entire thesis.

- A copy of the last Research and Professional Development Planning (RPDP) report.
- A formal written recommendation from the Supervisor(s) based on the advice of the RSP. The recommendation is to be sent directly by the supervisor to the TAP and the PhD Coordinator.

During the TAP meeting, the student must give a presentation, which includes a short presentation of the research carried out so far and the research plan for the rest of the PhD. The School's Transfer Assessment Panel will, after careful review of the documentation and a meeting with the candidate, make one of the following recommendations to the Graduate Research Board:

- Transfer to Stage 2 of the PhD programme.
- Resubmission of revised materials at a later date, with a timeline agreed between the RSP and the TAP.
- Transfer to another graduate programme, 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 Graduate Research Board (GRB) and any proposed transfer to another programme will have to be agreed with that programme. Students will be notified shortly after the transfer assessment of the outcome. If the recommendation is to progress to Stage 2, students will progress to the next phase of the PhD. If the recommendation is other than progression to Stage 2, the options recommended by the assessment panel, and the potential for re-presenting to the assessment panel sitting, will be discussed with the RSP. Students have the right to appeal a decision of the TAP. For more information on the appeals process, go to <https://www.ucd.ie/secca/assessmentappeals/>

Years 4 and Beyond (PhD phase)

As outlined in the Terms and Conditions of the School's scholarships, funding is allocated for four (4) years. In some circumstances and subject to the School's budget, upon application and formal review, the School will grant a 5th Year of School Funding. The details and requirements are outlined in the [Guidelines: 5th Year of School of Economics Funding](#).

The final, but most important step in the PhD programme, is the completion of the thesis. The majority of theses in the school are composed of three or more research papers. Usually, these papers have a common theme; however, they are not required to do so. Research papers can be co-authored. In line with the GRB Guidelines, if all the research papers are co-authored, a fourth paper is required. The student should also provide a written explanation of their personal contribution on each paper to their supervisor and to the RSP in advance of submitting the dissertation to the university. The School strongly recommends that one paper is single-authored to signal a student's ability on the academic job market.

To produce their dissertations, students should work closely with their supervisor(s) to ensure that the research and presentation meets the standards expected of a doctoral thesis. Before submission, the primary supervisor is required to sign-off that the thesis is ready for submission. Students who are of the opinion that sign-off is being unreasonably withheld can appeal in the first instance to the PhD Coordinator, the School PhD Committee, the Deputy Head of School for Research, and, ultimately, to the Academic Council Committee on Examinations (ACCE).

All dissertations submitted must include a statement on plagiarism in accordance with the University's policy on plagiarism. The UCD policy on plagiarism is available [here](#).

PhD dissertations can only be submitted if fees are paid in full and student registration is current. Students must also have completed their [Research Integrity Training](#). Information on submitting your thesis can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Thesis Examination

In order to submit a dissertation, all students must have transferred into Stage 2 of the structured PhD programme and have completed the mandatory 60 credits of taught modules satisfactorily. PhD theses are examined by a PhD Examination Committee comprising of one external examiner, one internal examiner, and a Chair. The external examiner, who must be a recognised expert in the field, is nominated by the School, approved by the Graduate Research Board, and then ratified by the Academic Council Committee on Examinations (ACCE). The internal examiner is a member of the School of Economics who is not the student's supervisor. Per School convention, this also precludes members of a student's RSP. The thesis is assessed in accordance with UCD guidelines. Particular account is taken of the following:

- The originality of the work described and the theories developed in the dissertation
- The candidate's familiarity with the published work of other authors in related areas
- The candidate's ability to summarise the work of other authors and to synthesise a theoretical framework within which to position the work described in the dissertation
- The methodology adopted by the candidate to address the research topic
- Is it accurately and comprehensively described? Is it appropriate to the topic?
- Is the candidate aware of alternative methodologies which might have been employed?
- Is the candidate sensitive to any inherent weaknesses in the methodology?
- Where a novel method has been developed, has it been tested and calibrated appropriately?
- Experimental design
- Presentation of the results of the research.
- Are the results presented in a clear, accessible way?
- Are tables, figures or diagrams, where included, adequately annotated and correctly referenced in the text?

- Interpretation of results. Are the candidate's conclusions reasonable on the basis of the evidence presented?
- Has the significance of the results been fully appreciated by the candidate?
- Has the correct statistical analysis been employed (where appropriate) and justifiable conclusions arrived at?
- Have theories formulated on the basis of the results taken into account relevant findings published by other authors?
- Has the candidate identified any weaknesses or gaps in the evidence brought forward?
- The bibliography: Is it comprehensive and up-to-date? Are references to the published literature annotated accurately and consistently in a recognised citation style?
- Presentation of the dissertation - is it free of typographical and other errors?

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the guidelines in relation to their thesis [see here](#).

Students are examined orally in a viva voce examination where they must defend their work and the resultant conclusions (in the context of the foregoing criteria). After the viva voce the report of the examiners is considered by the ACCE.

Possible outcomes of the viva voce examination:

1. Award Degree – no revisions required
2. Award Degree – revisions required
3. Revise thesis and submit for re-examination **
4. Do not award Degree – recommendation the candidate transfers to an appropriate graduate programme
5. Do not award Degree
6. No unanimous agreement reached

** This recommendation will incur additional fees as the student will have to register for additional trimesters.

Some amendments to the dissertation are usually required. In the event of a recommendation by the examiners that a PhD degree should not be awarded, the student can submit a revised dissertation for re-examination subject to the conditions set out by the ACCE. On submission, the revised dissertation must be accompanied by a statement from the supervisor(s) that the dissertation has been revised under their supervision. Students can also appeal a decision of the ACCE to the Assessments Appeals Committee.

Participation Throughout the Programme

Throughout the programme, students are expected to participate in and contribute to the research activities in the School. This includes the regular attendance of research seminars and brown bag seminars as well as regular attendance and presentations in the PhD seminar.

Tutoring

Students who are funded by the School (either School or BDIC Scholarship) are required to be a tutor or TA for up to 5 hours a week each term. In addition to this, they are required to grade 50 finals scripts each term. Due to this, students **must** be available and in Ireland or Beijing for the duration of the Autumn and Spring trimesters, unless on a previously agreed upon Research Visit/Internship. Further information can be found in the [Tutor/TA Job Description](#), available on the PhD Shared Drive.

Tutoring/TA and grading opportunities for pay may also become available for students. Emails are generally sent out to students when something becomes available, however you can also email the Graduate Administrator to register your interest in this work. Permission from your funding body and Supervisor will be required.

Research Visits/Internships

The School supports and encourages PhD students to undertake research visits or internships as part of their studies, recognising the value of such endeavours. We want to facilitate any student who wishes to undertake a research visit or internship to further their research and careers, including those that are funded by the School and thus will have tutoring and TA duties.

To make the administration of these visits a straightforward process for both students and staff, set of School guidelines have been developed for [Research Visits and Internships](#) which can be found on the PhD Shared Drive, which includes a Google form that must be filled out by any student wishing to undertake this.

Awards

The student with the highest GPA in the six first-year PhD modules receives the Finola Kennedy Award, which is worth €200 (€100 in cash and €100 in a research account although the full amount can be used in research funding if so desired). In the event of a tie, all recipients will receive the award and the money will be distributed evenly between recipients.

All students who complete their TAP by the deadline are eligible for the Cormac O'Grada Award for the best transfer seminar paper. To be considered, the TAP must indicate to the PhD Coordinator that they believe the paper should be considered. The evaluation committee will consist of the Head of School, Deputy Head of School for Research and the PhD Coordinator. The winner of the award receives €200 in cash and €300 in a research account (as above, the full amount can be used in research funding if so desired). In the event of a tie, all recipients will receive the award and the money will be distributed evenly between recipients.

Further Information

All MLitt/PhD students are given access to the PhD Shared Google Drive by the Graduate Administrator. On the Drive you will find all of the most recent policies and guidelines, as well as information on opportunities, the job market, research skills, etc. Also available is information of our PhD Calendar, which you should all add to keep up to date with various events and deadlines.

Information on staff and how to contact them can be found [here](#).

Finances and Letter Requests

If you have a query about your School issued Scholarship, pay that you have received for extra grading or tutoring, please contact Lesley lesley.tohill@ucd.ie.

If you are buying anything from a research account (even your supervisor's), please double check this with Joanna before purchasing joanna.gumularz@ucd.ie.

If a student requires written confirmation of enrolment or official statements from the School, whether it be for visas, research visits, or job opportunities, please contact the Graduate Administrator.

A [Certificate of Attendance](#) and other [official documents](#) are available to students via SISweb.

For other letters, please request this from the Graduate Administrator with a **minimum** 48hrs notice.

Help and Advice

Throughout every stage of your research programme, there is always someone available to talk to. UCD and the School of Economics pride themselves on being approachable and supportive. Please feel free to reach out to a member of staff.

Academic Queries should be directed to your supervisor or the PhD Coordinator
Administrative Queries to the Graduate Administrator

Student Advisers

The UCD Student Advisory Service is a point of contact, support, and referral for all UCD students throughout their studies. Every academic programme in UCD has a dedicated Student Adviser who offers students the time and space to explore issues of concern to them. The Student Advisers can assist students in finding pathways to deal with personal, social, and emotional issues and can advise of appropriate UCD policies, procedures, and services. Student Advisers work closely with academic and administrative staff, as well as with the other student support staff to ensure that each student's experience at UCD is as fulfilling and enjoyable as possible.

For Postgraduate Research Students the designated adviser is:

Eamonn McHugh (eamonn.mchugh@ucd.ie, +353 1 716 1875)

UCD Student Counselling Service

The UCD Student Counselling Service is a confidential service available to all registered students, free of charge. The aim of the service is to provide easily accessible professional psychological support to assist students with personal challenges that affect their lives as university students. Counselling is provided in-person and digitally. Information on how to access the Counselling Service is available [here](#).

Students may also speak to a GP first who can advise on counselling and medication if needed.

A list of other supports can be found [here](#)

Leave of Absence

Students who, under unforeseen circumstances, need to take time out of the Programme can apply for a leave of absence (LoA). An LoA can be for up to a maximum of one-third of the length of the programme (four trimesters for full time students and six trimesters for part time students) and must be sought by the sixth week from the start of term. After this time, retrospective applications are only approved due to extenuating circumstances. In the first instance, students should contact their supervisor or the School on the process. A student on LoA cannot be active on the Programme i.e. they cannot meet with supervisor(s), attend lectures, access the library, or receive grants/scholarships. However, students continue to have access to their UCD Connect account, including email, during this time.

For more information and guidance on the leave of absence policy, and to apply online, please click [here](#). Please ensure to inform the Graduate Administrator if you apply for a Leave of Absence online.

Withdrawal

If you wish to withdraw from the programme, please complete the online form via your SISWEB account and notify the Graduate Administrator.

The policy and online form can be found [here](#).