

## Part 1 Programme details

<b>Proposed title/Existing title and code</b>	Research Programme
<b>Mode and duration of programme</b>	4/2/1 years full-time PhD & DMus/ MPhil / PgDip 6/3/2 years part-time PhD & DMus/ MPhil / PgDip
<b>ECTS</b>	20/10/5 ECTS assigned to taught modules within the programme PhD & DMus/ MPhil / PgDip
<b>TU Dublin Award(s) sought</b>	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Doctor of Music (DMus) Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Postgraduate Diploma by Research (PgDip (Res))
<b>Classifications of award(s)</b>	Unclassified
<b>School responsible</b>	Graduate Research School
<b>Professional body accreditation and relevant dates (where applicable)</b>	N/A
<b>External provider type (where applicable)</b>	N/A
<b>Delivery location</b>	All Faculties and Campuses

## Part 2 Programme approval information

<b>Date of initial approval (of Q1A) by SLT's Academic and Research Committee/SLT</b>	N/A
<b>Date of validation/review event</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Date of approval by Academic Council and Governing Body</b>	
<b>Proposed date of re-commencement</b>	September 2021

### **Part 3 Programme background/structure**

#### ***Background***

This programme has been put forward for review by the Research Programme Committee. The Research Programme Committee has representation from across TU Dublin and also includes research student representatives and active supervisors. Each Faculty is represented and in addition representatives from several National and International PhD programmes are members of the Committee.

#### ***Stated aims and learning outcomes of the programme***

The aims of the research programme at TU Dublin are aligned with Ireland's National Framework for Doctoral Education. Specifically the framework commits Irish higher education institutions (HEIs) to the highest standards in the provision of research education through the following principles, which have been endorsed by TU Dublin:

1. The core of doctoral education is deep engagement with a question, problem or hypothesis at the frontier of knowledge, and advancement of this frontier under the guidance of expert and committed supervision. To be awarded a doctoral degree, the candidate must have made an original contribution to knowledge.
2. Successful completion and examination of the research thesis, comprising work of publishable quality, is the basis for the award of the doctoral degree. The thesis can be presented in a variety of formats.
3. Doctoral education increases significantly students' depth and breadth of knowledge of their discipline and develops their expertise in research methodology which is applicable to both a specific project and a wider context. It provides a high-quality research experience, training (including a formalised integrated programme of personal and professional development) and output consistent with international norms and best practice.
4. Doctoral education is conducted in a learning community where sufficient critical mass of internationally recognised research activity exists to allow students to gain access to a training programme of appropriate breadth and to interact with peers engaged in their field, nationally and internationally.
5. Recognising that each doctorate is unique, doctoral education is also flexible so as to support students within individual disciplines or within interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary groups.
6. Doctoral education is conducted in a research environment with a high degree of academic quality and infrastructure and where it is consistent with institutional strategies. Academic quality includes quality supervision and training for supervisors.
7. The admission of doctoral students takes into account preparedness of the applicant, the availability of qualified, competent and accessible supervision and the resources necessary to conduct the research.
8. Doctoral education is supported by established structures with: - formal monitoring of progress to completion against published criteria, supported by institutional arrangements; - clearly defined examination processes, involving external examiners, assessment criteria and declared outcomes.
9. A robust quality assurance system underpins all.

## **Programme Learning Outcomes**

The programme outcomes below are in line with National Framework of Qualifications for Level 9 and 10 programmes and research programmes.

- Knowledge – breadth: A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning,
- Knowledge – kind: The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers,
- Know-how and skill range: Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials,
- Know-how and skill-selectivity: Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge,
- Competence – context: Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts,
- Competence – role: Communicate results of research and innovation to peers, engage in critical dialogue, lead and originate complex social processes,
- Competence – learning to learn: Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts,
- Competence – insight: Scrutinize and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them.

### ***Programme structure***

There are two main elements to the proposed research programmes at TU Dublin:

- Element 1: - Original Research
- Element 2: - Professional Skills Development: 4 modules of 5 ECTS each in Research Integrity (Year 1), Starting Your Research (Year 1), Progressing Your Research (Year 2) and Completing Your Research (Year 3) delivered 3 times per year in one week training blocks.

Students submitting for the award of PgDip (Res) must complete the module: Research Integrity

Students submitting for the award of MPhil must complete the two modules: Starting Your Research and Research Integrity

Students submitting for the award of DMus or PhD must complete the four modules: Starting Your Research, Research Integrity, Progressing Your Research and Completing Your Research

### ***Entry Requirements***

The entry requirements for the PhD programme are as follows:

- Minimum of a 2.1 honours degree (level 8) in a relevant discipline  
or
- Transfer from the research Master's degree (level 9)

The entry requirements for the DMus (Performance) programme are as follows:

- Outstanding level of music performance demonstrated by audition.  
and
- Minimum of a 2.1 honours degree (level 8) in a relevant discipline  
or

- Transfer from the research Master's degree (level 9)

The entry requirements for a research Master's programme are as follows:

- Minimum of a 2.2 honours degree (level 8) in a relevant discipline  
or
- Transfer from the Postgraduate Diploma by Research (PgDip(Res))  
or
- Transfer from a taught Master's programme of TU Dublin

The entry requirements for a PgDip(Res) programme are:

- Minimum of a pass degree (level 8) in a relevant discipline

### **Student assessment**

In accordance with TU Dublin City Campus General Assessment Regulations.

### **Derogations from the General Assessment Regulations, including rationale for derogation and view of the Panel:**

Students have a maximum of 2 attempts to pass any module,

## **Part 4 Validation Details and Membership of Panel**

*Venue: MS Teams*

### **Schedule of meetings:**

#### **Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 13.00pm | Introductory meeting of Validation Panel with the Director of Research, Head of Graduate Research School, Co-ordinator of Graduate Research School and College/Campus Heads of Research (Presentation and Overview of the Programme and Changes being Made) |
| 13.45pm | Private meeting of Panel to discuss and draw up an agenda of matters to be raised at subsequent meetings with various groups  |
| 14.45pm | Panel Break   |
| 15.00pm | Meeting with the Programme Committee to discuss the Self Study, issues arising and proposed changes to the Programme  |
| 16.30pm | Private Meeting of the Panel  |

#### **Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 9.00am  | Private Meeting of the Panel   |
| 9.30am  | Meeting with a Selection of Research Supervisors   |
| 10.30am | Private Meeting of the Panel   |
| 11.00am | Meeting with student representatives from the programme (8 people) to discuss their experience of the programme (focus on structure, modules, assessment)        |
| 12.00pm | Private Meeting of the Panel   |
| 12.30pm | Lunch Break  |
| 13.30pm | Meeting of Panel with staff involved in Professional Skills Development  |
| 14.30pm | Break  |
| 14.45pm | Private Meeting of the Panel to formulate key issues for the draft report (Head of School to be on standby should the Panel require any matters to be clarified) |
| 16.40pm | Draft Panel report to be circulated to panel members   |
| 17.00pm | Oral Presentation of the Panel report to Head of School and representatives of the Programme Committee   |

## Panel Membership

### *Internal Panel Members*

Dr Fintan Kelleher

Department of Applied Science  
TU Dublin Tallaght Campus

Dr Ciaran O'Leary

Head of Learning Development, College of Sciences & Health  
TU Dublin City Campus

Dr Markus Hoffman

Department of Informatics  
TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus

### *External Panel Members*

Professor Melita Kovacevic  
Chair

EUA CDE Former Chair, SC, PRIDE Vice Chair  
Professor of Psycholinguistic and Neurolinguistic  
University of Zagreb, Croatia

Dr Murat Özgören.

EUA-CDE Former Board Member, ESFRI Turkish  
Delegate, Department of Biophysics Chair, Faculty of  
Medicine, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus and  
NERITA TTO Director

Dr Ray Lloyd

CTO, Eiratech Robotics

**Documentation submitted:** Self Evaluation and alignment with National Frameworks, Self Evaluation and alignment with Statutory Guidelines, Self Evaluation and 2020 Stakeholder and Student Surveys, Student Handbook, Draft 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Graduate Research Regulations

## **Part 5 Summary of Panel findings against key questions**

Note: The Panel's findings (ie yes/no) and any additional comments against each of the key questions should be recorded below. Where a 'no' is recorded, an associated condition or recommendation should be included in Part 6, Findings of the Panel.

PhD Review Criteria	Yes / No
Are the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme well-founded and clearly formulated?	Yes
Are facilities and resources, including staff, in place to support the delivery of the programme at the standard proposed?	Yes, observation in relation to workload model
Are the entry requirements clear and appropriate?	Yes
Are the arrangements for access, transfer and progression clear and appropriate?	Yes
Are the Recognition of Prior Learning regulations clear and appropriate?	Yes, further details to be included on the admissions process and

	recommendation in relation to operation of RPL for exemptions
Does the programme comply with the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes	Yes
The programme complies with QQI Irelands Framework for of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes	Yes
The programme comply with the HEA Doctoral Framework	Yes
Are the programme learning outcomes at the appropriate level as set out by the NFQ requirements?	Yes, Recommendation in relation to Programme Learning Outcomes for each Programme
Is the Supervision Model proposed on the Programme appropriate and in line with the Good Practice Guidelines?	Yes, recommendation made in relation to improvements
Is the Assessment Strategy (Annual Evaluation, Transfer / Confirmation Examination and Final Thesis Submission Examination) for the Programme appropriate and in line with Good Practice Guidelines?	Yes, recommendations made in relation to improvement
Is the Induction Model appropriate and in line with Good Practice Guidelines	Yes
<p>Module Specific Criteria: Do the individual modules contribute to a coherent programme?</p> <p>In the modules are there appropriate use of student-centred learning, teaching and assessment strategies, which recognise the needs of diverse student groups?</p> <p>Are the assessment methods and criteria aligned to the learning outcomes in each module?</p> <p>Do the curricula and teaching schemes in each module descriptor give realisable substance to the module's aims, objectives and learning outcomes?</p>	Yes recommendations made in relation to improvements
Are Graduate Attributes embedded within the programme?	Yes recommendations made in relation to improvements

## Part 6 Recommendations of the Panel

### • Overall recommendations of the Panel

The panel commends the programme committee on the work undertaken to develop the programme. The panel is supportive of the key programme changes proposed. The panel is impressed by the energy and commitment of the programme team and module authors and the collegiality and teamwork across the University to develop this programme.

The panel notes that the University is going through major changes both at a structural organizational design level and in terms of the development of a revised Doctoral programme, which need to intertwine to be strategically fulfilling and operational.

The panel recommends continuing approval of the programme with the following awards, subject to the submission of updated documentation which addresses the panel's below recommendations.

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications
- Doctor of Music (DMus) at level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil) at level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications
- Postgraduate Diploma by Research (PgDip (Res)) at level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications

### Recommendations

The Programme Committee should articulate in the Student Handbook how the PhD Programme is positioned in relation to the University Strategic Plan and National Frameworks and Plans. This should include an outline of what is important about this PhD programme and what is complementary with the Irish Higher Education and Research road maps. This should include how Societal challenges (including UN SDGs) and Civic Life dimensions are going to be achieved and interwoven within the programme.

The Programme Committee should develop a Programme Development Plan which shows clearly the analysis done and the actions (with action ownership and timelines) planned to enhance the programme. This plan should include key strategic performance metrics and consideration of how students will be supported for graduate employment in industry.

The Student Handbook should be updated to include the details (current and/or planned) discussed with the panel including:

- Indicative part-time routes for completion of the programme
- The accessibility of modules through remote delivery and arrangements for students who are unable to participate in the block delivery.
- Separate programme learning outcomes for the PhD, DMus, MPhil and PgDip awards.
- Details on how Graduate Attributes will be achieved
- Details on the provision of statistics, data management and data analysis support for students
- Details on the widening participation and equality, diversity and inclusivity strategy for the programme
- Details of the additional training workshops that are available to research students.

- Details on how students' well-being is being supported and the supports available to students.
- Details on the social activities available to enable research students to network with each other
- Details on the role of work-based learning
- Details on the mechanisms in place to address conflicts that may arise between students and supervisors and within the supervisory team
- Clearer reference to the Intellectual Property Policies, Procedures and Supports that are available

The panel notes that it is intended for Discipline Modules to continue to be a part of the programme, albeit as electives rather than as a mandatory requirement. The programme committee should develop a plan for how Discipline Modules will be integrated into the programme and how students will be supported to undertake these modules. The students with whom the panel met, were very keen for the discipline modules to continue and become more accessible. The programme committee needs to engage with the Schools to agree the mechanisms for the delivery and assessment of these modules.

Consideration should be given to how the professional development supports provided to staff can be made more widely available to research students.

The programme should proactively carry out graduate monitoring and collate further information on the career destinations of graduates on an ongoing basis.

The programme committee should develop a plan to provide more career development support for research students. This could be supported by external stakeholder engagement (government, NGOs, industry etc) in the improvement of career development supports.

The Graduate Research School should provide further opportunities to support researcher networks and sharing of practice between supervisors in addition to existing training.

The Graduate Research School need to oversee that there is consistency between campuses in relation the operation of the research programme and the conditions under which research students are required to undertake teaching and demonstrating.

The Graduate Research School should encourage the development of a Postgraduate Research Society.

There is a need for the provision of further professional administrative support for supervisors and students with appropriate distribution of responsibilities. The correct contact points for support and guidance must be clear to students and supervisors.

A continuous conflict resolution map should be developed for the programme that facilitates the early detection of resolution of issues that may arise between students and supervisors and within supervisory teams (as well as external parties).

The University's Annual Programme Monitoring report should be tailored for the Research Programmes, to reflect the key performance indicators for the Research Programme and the implementation of the new module structure and performance.

The supervisors with whom the panel met, confirmed the importance and usefulness of the annual evaluation process. Supervisors have also made suggestions on how the annual evaluation process may be improved. The Programme Committee should engage further



with Supervisors, Heads of School and Heads of Research with a view to further improving the annual evaluation process.

The title of Professional Skills Modules is not reflective of the proposed content of the 4-modules and a more appropriate title would be beneficial so it is clear what the purpose and role of these modules is. The use of Problem Based Learning is suggested to be made more explicit in the modules. More details are required in relation to the proposed content and assessments. Details on the streams within the modules to allow for specialization in certain topics e.g research methods, statistics needs to be included. Intellectual Property considerations could be brought into the Research Integrity Module or Progressing Your Research Module. This should be highlighted as part of the approval of the initial research plan. Training on intellectual property considerations should be provided to new researchers and supervisors.

A Communications plan needs to be put in place to improve communications and improve the knowledge of supervisors and students in relation to the forms that need to be completed at each stage.

A transitions plan should be developed which outlines the arrangements and programme regulations which will apply to each cohort of currently registered students.

The Programme Committee should remove the ECTS limit for the application of RLP for exemptions and extend the timeframe for students to apply for RPL.

The Programme Committee should give consideration to how the programme can continue to implement some of the aspects of the programme that were designed on a temporary basis during the Covid-19 crisis, and more generally, how the programme will respond to work practice changes in a post-Covid-19 world.

## **Observations**

Clarity is required on the workload model and the timetabled hours assigned to supervise different types (full-time / part-time) of students and whether there should be a cap on the maximum number of timetable hours for research supervision. Further consideration by University Management in the workload model is required to encourage and facilitate staff to further engage in research and to consider the time requirements for applying for funding, administration of research projects, examining research students, chairing viva voce examinations and hosting visiting students. This could include, for example, the provision of opportunities to apply for sabbaticals and hosting visiting students. This could include the provision of more sabbaticals to facilitate supervisors.

Adequate structures, resources, training and expertise should be provided for ethical approval with a view to improving the efficiency of the process. Respecting the constraints, consideration should be given to different mechanisms and modes for ethical approval. The Graduate Research School should highlight this within the current Organisational Design Process.

## **Appendix 1– Editorial Inconsistencies**

Student Handbook: P51 onwards - Module descriptors - 15/20 hours (it was 30 hours earlier). Where do the additional hours come in if the assessment is all continuous during the module? Same applies to other modules. [Remember that in section 3.2.5 the following is stated: "Professional development skills training for each group is delivered over five 6 hour days (30 hours), with additional online training and self-directed learning (70 hours) and therefore each week is approved for 5 ECTS."]

The presentation and student handbook provided different details of the module requirements for PgDip and MPhil students

## **Appendix 2 - Feedback in relation to the draft Regulations**

*RPL Process for admission is not described*

*Graduate Mentor system is not described. How this be mandatory, how will mentors be selected and trained, what will their role be?*

Regulations:

**P8** - Where's the code of conduct?

**P15** – Should be stated as electives: "Such training in discipline specific skills is unique to each individual student and their project and is an inherent part of any PhD. As such, this training is included in Element 1 of research programmes and is not accredited separately. However, the Graduate Research School Office, if notified, will ensure that all discipline specific training successfully completed by the student will be noted on their record in the Student Information System."

**P18** – Further details required on discipline specific module boards: "The Graduate Research School Office is responsible for organising the module board meetings to consider the assessment results for each student. Module boards will take place in February, July and November each year. Module Boards will be chaired by the Head of the Graduate Research School and all lecturers."

**P23.** *Former postdoctoral researchers and/or former employees of TU Dublin may act as external examiners 3 years after leaving the university.*

What about former PhD graduates?

**P26.** *The Graduate Research School Board shall then consider the recommendation taking account of the views of the examination panel and the Graduate Research School Office will provide written notification of the decision to the student.*

Can the GRSB override the decision of the Examination Panel?

**P42** It states that if a student submits without the consent of the supervisor and then has major corrections, the Head of School has to appoint a new supervisor? What is there isn't anybody available and how does this section tie into Section 6.6.2.5 and 6.2.4

**P47/48.** IP consideration must be given for PhDs by Prior Publication for research conducted in non-TU Dublin facilities.?

**P50** Maximum leave periods do not match current employment legislation

**P51.** What is the procedure if a supervisor leaves the University and goes to another academic position in a different University? If the research funding was acquired by the supervisor, research overheads, etc.?

### **P51. 6.2.4 Replacement Supervision**

Bullet point 3: How does the student make this known – what is the process and procedure?

Bullet point 4: How/Who assesses whether the supervisor has neglected their obligations?

Responsibility of the GRS or supervisor's Academic School. Procedure needed.

**P67.** Not clear what the difference is between the **Head** of the GRS, and **Dean** of the GRS?