


Operational details for registered postgraduate students (Postgraduate student handbook)		
	3CD07	File Location:
		Current Revision: 06
		Approved by Postgraduate SC of Academic Council February 22 nd 2018
		Document Owner: Registrar
	3CD07.06	Document Level: 3

Operational details for registered postgraduate students 3CD07 (Postgraduate student handbook)

Revision History

Revision	Date	Revision Description DCRT#	Originator
01	3 February 2005	Update of postgraduate student handbook December 2000 including reference to HETAC	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
02	21 November 2005	Amendment to extern examiners for staff thesis as per postgraduate sc of AC meeting 21 November 2005	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
03	22 August 2007	Amendment to include reference to independent Chairperson of examination board and general update	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
04	5 September 2007	Amendment to include process for transfer from masters to PhD programme	Registrar
05	17 April 2018	Amendment to reflect comments of Research and Postgraduate Subcommittee of Academic Council 17/10/17	Head of the Department – Registrar's Office
06	31 January 2019	Update to reflect Name Change of Organisation	Administrator Registrar Office

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to record operational details for postgraduate programmes by research at the Institute. This document refers to Institute regulations, procedures, forms and sources of reference material.

2. Scope

This document is relevant to all potential and registered postgraduate Masters and PhD students and their supervisors.

3. Reference

2MP19	Research policy
3AD12	Academic Programme tuition fees
3AD13	Procedure for admission of postgraduate students to Masters by Research and PhD programmes
3AS05	Examination regulations
3AS06	Academic programme assessment policy and procedure
3AS10	Examination script inspection, and result recheck and appeals process
3AS34	Procedure for submission and assessment of Masters and PhD theses
3GB13	Academic Council and Academic Council subcommittees terms of reference
3HS04	Student responsibilities for health and safety
3IT13	Computer usage policy
3LB01	Library usage policy
3RD01	Research ethics and code of good research practice
3RD02	Intellectual property policy
3RD03	Research student appointment and training
3SS03	Student Charter
3SS04	Student disciplinary procedures
3SS05	Policy on sexual harassment and bullying of students at the Institute
3SS09	Student appeals board
3SS11	Alcohol consumption policy
4FAD06	PG1: Application form for admission to postgraduate programme at the Institute.
4FAD17	Application for ethical clearance of a project
4FAS05	PG3 Nomination of external and internal examiners for higher degrees by thesis
4FAS06	PG4 Intention to submit Masters or PhD thesis
4FAS07	PG5: Internal or external examiners report on thesis for degree of Masters or Doctorate of Philosophy by research
4FAS22	PG6: Notification to HETAC of external examiner(s) appointed and nomination of independent Chairperson for a research degree programme examination
4FCD04	PG2: Annual review of progress: Student return
4FCD05	PG2a: Annual review of progress: Director of Studies return

Current versions of all policy documents are available on the Institute Document Management system (DMS) accessible from the intranet home page or www.itb.ie/dms/logon.asp

Procedure

Postgraduate study at the Institute

- The Institute is committed to supporting and promoting research, development and innovation throughout its academic schools. It provides opportunities for postgraduate study on a full-time and part-time basis. Postgraduate research is carried out under the supervision and guidance of a thesis committee, with one Director of Studies, who is experienced in the specific research field. A student at the Institute may register for a research programme leading to a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) award at Masters or Doctoral level.
- Research policy of the Institute is presented in "Research Policy" (2MP19).
- Following satisfactory completion of the Institutes internal registration process, application is made by the Institute to QQI on behalf of the student to have their name entered on the appropriate postgraduate register of QQI.
- Postgraduate theses are examined by the Institute using procedures adopted by the Academic Council of the Institute.
- QQI awards Masters and Doctorate degrees to students who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research and reach standards for QQ level 9 or 10 awards, as appropriate.

The Master's Award

- The Master's degree is awarded to a candidate who has critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic at an appropriate academic level, and which has been critically evaluated and set in its context. The candidate will also have demonstrated an understanding of research methods and techniques appropriate to the chosen field, and presented a submission of the research, and defended it, by oral examination, to the satisfaction of the examiners. Standards used for assessment of Masters programmes are as published for Masters awards at QQI level 9 by QQI. For further information, see www.qqi.ie
- An award can be conferred by QQI at level 9 in the following areas
 - Master of Arts
 - Master of Science
 - Master of Engineering
 - Master of Business
 - Master of Philosophy

The PhD Award

- The PhD is a research award and cannot be obtained following a postgraduate taught programme alone. The PhD is awarded to a candidate who has critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic, or who has carried out an approved creative programme at an appropriate level which is critically evaluated and set in its context. A PhD must result in an independent and original contribution to knowledge, or an independent, original and significant contribution to the advancement of the discipline.
- The candidate will also have demonstrated an understanding of research methods and/or techniques appropriate to the chosen field, and presented a submission of the research where applicable, and defended it, by oral examination, to the satisfaction of the examiners.

Standards used for assessment of PhD programmes are as published for Doctoral degrees at level 10 by QQI. For further information, see www.QQI.ie

- An award can be conferred by QQI at QQI level 10 in the following area
 - Doctor of Philosophy

Research & Post-Graduate Studies Sub Committee

- The activities of postgraduate students at the Institute are monitored by a sub-committee of the Academic Council, the research and post-graduate studies sub committee. This committee is chaired by the Registrar, and consists of the Heads of School and at least two other academic staff representing academic disciplines in the Institute, and a postgraduate student. The Institute requires that the research and post-graduate studies sub committee is composed of persons who are, or have been engaged in research or who have appropriate experience of successful research degree supervision.
- The terms of reference of this committee are documented in "Academic Council and Academic Council subcommittees terms of reference" (3GB13).

Admission

- Procedures for admission as a postgraduate student are documents in "Procedure for admission of postgraduate students to Masters by Research and PhD programmes" (3AD13). This document outlines actions and responsibilities of postgraduate students and staff during the application, consideration and registration of a student as a postgraduate student.
- Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study subject to the requirement that the proposed programme is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners.
- Postgraduate research must be undertaken in a specific school, under the supervision of a principal supervisor, designated as the Director of Studies. If the proposed research is interdisciplinary, primary responsibility for the research must reside with one academic school. This will normally be the school of the Director of Studies. All proposed research programmes will be considered for research degree registration on their academic merits.
- All official communication regarding admission and registration and liaison with the QQI must be made solely through the Registrar's office
- Application for consideration for registration as a postgraduate student of the Institute is made using form "PG1: Application form for admission to postgraduate programme at the Institute" (4FAD06). It is required that the applicant consults with the Head of the relevant School, the Head of the relevant Department and the proposed Director of Studies before making a formal application, and the application is signed by the student, all thesis committee members, the Head of Department and the Head of School.
- The application for admission will be considered by the Research and postgraduate studies subcommittee of Academic Council. In considering applications for admission, the committee shall satisfy itself that all of the following requirements are fulfilled:
 - students are suitably qualified.
 - students are embarking on viable research programmes.
 - supervision is adequate and likely to be sustained.
 - the research environment is suitable.
- The normal entry requirement for registration for the degree of Master is a first or second class honours degree of an Institute, University or establishment of higher education in

Ireland. Alternatively, a qualification which is regarded by the research and post-graduate studies sub committee as equivalent to such an honours degree will be considered.

- Applications from students holding qualifications other than those listed above will be considered on their merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the programme of work proposed. A student wishing to be considered under this regulation must include in the application for registration the names of two suitable persons who the research and post-graduate studies sub committee may consult concerning his/her academic attainment and fitness for research. In considering applicants in this category, the research and post-graduate studies sub committee will look for evidence of a student's ability and background knowledge in relation to the proposed research. Professional experience or publications, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment will be taken into consideration. The research and post-graduate studies sub committee may require an applicant to pass an externally assessed qualifying examination at final year honours degree level, arranged by the Institute or sponsoring establishment, before registration is approved.
- Direct registration for the degree of PhD may be permitted to students who hold a QQI Level 8 or level 9 degree awarded by an Irish Institute or establishment of higher education or an overseas degree of equivalent standard to QQI Level 8 or 9.
- Except where permission has been given for the submission and the oral examination to be in another language, the research and post-graduate studies sub committee must satisfy itself that the student has sufficient command of the English language. The candidate must be able to satisfactorily complete the programme of work and to prepare and defend a submission in English.
- Registration may be backdated by up to 6 months from the date of receipt of the application by the research and post-graduate studies sub committee. Longer periods of backdating may be permitted exceptionally at the discretion of the committee.
- The research and post-graduate studies sub committee may consider applications from students proposing to work outside Ireland, provided the following conditions are fulfilled;
 - The student is Ireland-based and has established close links with the Institute or a research or educational establishment in Ireland.
 - The student's sponsoring establishment is located in Ireland.
 - There is satisfactory evidence as to the facilities available for the research both in the Institute and sponsoring establishment.
 - The arrangements proposed for supervision enable frequent and substantial contact between the student and the supervisors based in Ireland, including adequate face-to-face contact with the supervisors.
- Students may register on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time students are expected to devote on average at least 35 hours per week to their research, part-students on average at least 12 hours per week.
- Where a research degree project is part of a piece of funded research, the research and post-graduate studies sub committee must establish to its satisfaction that the terms on which the research is funded do not detract from the attainment of the objectives and requirements of the student's research degree.
- Where a student has previously undertaken research as a registered student for a research degree the research and post-graduate studies sub committee may approve a shorter than usual registration period which takes account of all or part of the time already spent by the student on such research.

Fees

- Fees charged are compiled on an annual basis to include
 - a tuition fee equivalent to the degree level of an undergraduate course
 - the non-tuition student charge established annually by the Department of Education and Science
 - the registration fee charged by QQI
- Tuition fees are payable by all students. Fees are documented in the current version of Academic Programme tuition fees (3AD12).

Registration

- Enrolment with the Institute and Registration with QQI can only take place following approval by the Academic Council sub-committee on research and post-graduate studies, and subsequently following approval by QQI. Approval will be based on suitability of the student to undertake research; of the programme of research; of the supervision arrangements and research facilities. This approval requires appropriate academic judgement to be brought to bear on the viability of each research proposal.
- Where a student of the Institute, the sponsoring establishment or the collaborating establishment wishes the submission to remain confidential for a period of time after completion of the work, application for approval should normally be made to the research and post-graduate studies sub committee at the time of registration. In cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent stage, a special application for the thesis to remain confidential after submission must be made immediately to the research and post-graduate studies sub committee. The period approved shall not normally exceed two years.
- Once registered, postgraduate students are required to adhere to all relevant general Institute policies including
 - Student Charter (3SS03),
 - Policy on sexual harassment and bullying of students at the Institute (3SS05),
 - Student disciplinary procedures (3SS04),
 - Alcohol consumption policy (3SS11),
 - Library usage policy (3LB01)
 - Computer usage policy (3IT13)
 - Student responsibilities for health and safety (3HS04)
- Before starting research, postgraduate students must familiarise themselves with relevant Institute procedures for postgraduate students including
 - Code of good research practice, postgraduate student training and roles and responsibilities (3RD01)
 - Intellectual property policy (3RD02)
 - Research ethics (3RD03)
 - Application for ethical clearance of a project (4FAD17)

Registration Periods

- The normal minimum and maximum periods of registration are detailed below.

	Full time		Part time	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Masters degree	21 months	48 months	36 months	72 months
PhD degree	36 months	72 months	48 months	96 months

- Where there is evidence that the research is proceeding exceptionally well, the research and post-graduate studies sub committee may recommend a shorter than normal period of registration. Application for such shortening should be submitted at the same time as the application for approval of examination arrangements or at an annual review of progress.
- In the event of a student's registration on a postgraduate programme lapsing as a result of exceeding the maximum duration, applicants should re-apply to the Registrar for admission to the programme.
- The research and post-graduate studies sub committee may recommend extending a students period of registration. This will normally be done on a year by year basis.
- Where a student changes from full-time to part-time study or vice versa, their maximum registration period is calculated as if for a part-time student. The minimum registration period for such a student is calculated on a pro rata basis. Where, a student changes from full-time to part-time mode having already completed the minimum registration period for a full-time student, the minimum registration period will not be lengthened.
- Where a student is prevented by poor health or other cause from making progress with the research, a request may be made to suspend the registration by the research and post-graduate studies sub committee, normally for not more than one year at a time.
- Students seeking a change or extension of a registered research degree project must apply in writing to the research and post-graduate studies sub committee for approval.
- Where the student has discontinued his/her research, withdrawal of registration must be notified in writing to the Registrar.

External links and sponsorship

- Students may be enrolled with the Institute and registered with QQI for the degree of Master, or PhD by the Institute or through a sponsoring establishment located in Ireland, which is able to provide appropriate facilities for the conduct and supervision of scholarly research. This may be an establishment of higher education or an industrial, commercial, professional or research establishment
- Wherever possible the Institute encourages co-operation with industrial, commercial, professional or research establishments for the purposes of research leading to research degree awards. Such co-operation is intended:
 - to encourage outward-looking and relevant research;
 - to extend the student's own experience and perspectives of the work;
 - to provide a wider range of experience and expertise to assist in the development of the project;
 - to be mutually beneficial where appropriate to enable the student to become a member of a research community
- Formal collaboration normally involves the students' use of facilities and other resources, including supervision, which are provided jointly by the Institute or sponsoring establishment.
- The name(s) of the sponsoring establishment(s) shall appear with the name of the Institute on the student's submission.

Sponsoring Establishments

- A Student's research degree may be sponsored by an establishment of higher education in Ireland (other than an Institute) or by an industrial, commercial, professional or research establishment in Ireland which is able to meet the Institute's conditions as set out below.
- The Institute must be satisfied that the environment of the sponsoring establishment is a suitable one in which to undertake research leading to a research degree. Particular attention will be paid to the sponsoring establishment's ability to provide a programme of related studies.
- The sponsoring establishment will be responsible for
 - the general arrangements under which the students research is carried out, including arrangements for academic supervision and postgraduate study and the provision of adequate facilities to enable the student to conduct and complete the research programme in an efficient and safe manner.
 - proposing examination arrangements to the Institute for approval and for the conduct of the examination.
- Sponsoring establishments shall certify to the Institute annually by 1 October that their registered research degree students are still actively engaged on their research programmes and are maintaining regular and frequent contact with their supervisors.
- The sponsoring establishment shall appoint a designated person to be the normal correspondent with the Institute on research degree matters.
- Where a body external to the Institute is contributing facilities and other resources to a project, that body may be recognised formally as a collaborating establishment and acknowledged as such in the students submission.

Supervision

- All research degree students shall have a thesis committee of at least one and not normally more than three supervisors. These members are selected following consultation between the student and the Director of Studies.
- For PhD degrees, at least one supervisor shall have experience of supervising students to the successful completion of a research degree, preferably at PhD level.
- One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies (first supervisor) with responsibility to supervise the student on a regular and frequent basis.
- In addition to the supervisors, an adviser or advisers may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation.
- A person who is registered for a research degree at the Institute is ineligible to act as Director of Studies for a research degree student at the same level, but may act as a second supervisor or adviser.
- Proposals for a change in supervision arrangements should be made in writing to the research and post-graduate studies sub committee.

Progress monitoring

- Each registered student shall submit an annual report to the research and post-graduate studies sub committee on their progress in the previous year. This process requires completion of a form "PG2: Annual review of progress: Student return" (4FCD04) by the postgraduate student. These procedures are documented in Procedure for admission of postgraduate students to Masters by Research and PhD programmes (3AD13).

- Directors of Studies shall submit an annual report to the research and post-graduate studies sub committee on the progress of each research degree student under their supervision. This process requires completion of a form "PG2a: Annual review of progress: Director of Studies return" (4FCD05) by the principal supervisor. These procedures are documented in Procedure for admission of postgraduate students to Masters by Research and PhD programmes (3AD13).
- Each registered student shall present to a selection of members of the Post Graduate Sub Committee of Academic Council on an annual basis as part of the annual review process.
- Annual progress reports must be completed and returned to the Registrar's office before 1st October annually. Separate reports are required from the student and the Director of Studies. The Registrar refers the reports to the research and post-graduate studies sub committee for consideration. The committee may seek further clarification from either party and may ask for a meeting with either party. The submission of a satisfactory progress report is required in order to renew registration in the following year.
- Students are also expected to participate in external conferences seminars and other activities. Publication in refereed journals is strongly encouraged.

Transfer of registration from Master's to PhD programme of study

- Any candidate wishing to transfer from Masters register to Doctoral register should make a formal application to the Registrars office of the Institute, using form PG1 (4FAD06). Such application should normally be made not earlier than one year after admission to the Masters Register and not later than one year before the expected date of completion of the proposed Doctoral programme.
- At the end of the first 12 to 18 months of research the student should inform their supervisor of interest in progression to Doctoral register or the supervisor can suggest to the student the possibility of progressing based on research achievements to date and funding availability. If and when the supervisor considers the student has completed a sufficient body of work, the student will be asked to write a transfer report.
- The student will be required to write a transfer report where the content will have a similar format to a Masters thesis, with a review of literature and a detailed discussion of results to date.
- A formal transfer oral exam will be given to the student, which may include a student presentation. This will involve
 - internal examiner, internal supervisor (and perhaps external supervisor in cases where there is one) will be present with the student.
 - An external independent expert assessor report in the field of the proposed doctorate
- The internal examiner will write a report on the students performance based on
 - Work to date, and
 - Students understanding of their own work.
- The Institute will submit a report by the supervisor on the transferee candidates work to date, and the institutions recommendation to the Academic Council sub-committee on research and post-graduate studies, and should include
 - The students transfer report and
 - A copy of the report by the internal examiner.
 - A copy of the independent external expert assessor report.

Presentation of the Thesis.

- The following requirements must be adhered to in the format of the final Thesis. They are not intended as an exhaustive specification. Where fuller guidance is desired, reference may be made to the British Standards specification No.4821.
- The binding shall be of a fixed type so that pages cannot be removed or replaced. The front and rear boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright.
- The outside front board shall bear the title of the work in at least 24pt type. The name and initials of the student, the qualification and the year of submission shall also be shown on the front board. The same information (excluding the title of the work) shall be shown on the spine of the work.
- Copies of the Thesis shall be presented in a permanent and legible form either in typescript or print. Where copies are produced by any photocopying processes, these must be of a permanent nature. Where word processor and printing devices are used, the printer must be capable of producing text of a satisfactory quality. Students who are in any doubt as to the quality of text are referred to the sections of British Standard 4821 which deal with quality of reproduction and character quality.
- The submission may be printed on one side of the paper or on both sides of the paper. Where both sides of the paper are used, the paper must be sufficiently opaque to avoid show through.
- Double or one-and-a-half spacing must be used in typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
- Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams which are included as whole pages. (For more detailed issues relating to numbering refer to the relevant section of British Standard 4821).
- The title page shall give the following information:
 - the full title of the submission,
 - the full name of the author;
 - the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements
 - that the degree is awarded by QQI
 - the Sponsoring and/or the Sponsoring Establishment, if any;
 - the month and year of submission.

Submission of Thesis

- It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the submission is submitted to the Secretary of the Post Graduate Sub Committee of Academic Council of the Institute before the expiry of the registration period.
- Intention to submit a thesis must be communicated using form "PG4 Intention to submit Masters or PhD thesis" (4FAS06). Details are included in procedure for submission and assessment of Masters and PhD theses (3AS34).
- The submission for examination is at the sole discretion of the student. A student has the right to submit for examination regardless of the advice of the supervisors, although the principal supervisor is requested to sign form PG4 indicating approval of submission.

- The student must confirm, through the submission of a declaration form, that the submission has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. However, the student is not precluded from incorporating in the submission, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated, on the declaration form and also in the thesis, which work has been so incorporated.
- Students must satisfy any conditions of the eligibility for examination required by the Institute.
- Details of procedure for submitting completed thesis are included in "Procedure for submission and assessment of Masters and PhD theses" (3AS34).
- Except with specific permission of the Research & Post-Graduate Studies Sub Committee, the submission must be presented in English. Permission to present a submission in another language must normally be sought at the time of application for registration. Permission to present a submission in a language other than English is likely to be given only if the subject matter of the submission involves language and related studies.
- The Research & Post-Graduate Studies Sub Committee may only permit a student to present a Thesis in a language other than English if it is satisfied that adequate supervision in that other language can be arranged and that examiners who are capable of examining the submission in that other language are likely to be available. In such cases a summary in English of 1000 words must be included in the submission.
- The Thesis must include a statement of the student's objectives and must acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and any assistance received.
- There shall be an abstract (of approximately 300 words) bound into the submission which provides a synopsis of the Thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.
- Where a student's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the Thesis must indicate clearly the student's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration
- The copyright of the submission is vested in the student. At least two copies are normally required: students should obtain guidance from the appropriate officer of the Institute
- The student is free to publish material in advance of the submission but reference must be made to any such work in the Thesis. Copies of published material should either be bound in with the submission or placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the submission
- While submissions are normally in A4 format, the Institute may give permission for a submission to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the submission can be better expressed in that format. However, students using a format larger than A4 should note that the production of microfiche copies and full-size enlargements may not be feasible.
- A copy of every thesis submission will be sent to the Institute library for reference.
- Where the Institute has agreed that the confidential nature of the student's work is such as to preclude the submission being made freely available in the library of the Institute (and the sponsoring Establishment, if any), the submission shall, immediately on completion of the programme of work, be held by the Institute on restricted access and only be available to those who were directly involved in the project for a time not exceeding the approved period.
- The Institute is only likely to approve an application for confidentiality in order to enable a patent application to be lodged or to protect sensitive material. Thesis may not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads. While the normal maximum period of confidentiality is 2 years, in exceptional circumstances the Institute may approve a longer period.

- Following the award of the degree one copy of the submission must be lodged in the library of the Institute, and any Sponsoring Establishments.

Examination

- Students must take no part in the arrangement of their examination and have no formal contact with the external examiners between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.
- Postgraduate students must familiarise themselves with relevant Institute procedures for postgraduate students relating to examinations including
 - Examination regulations (3AS05)
 - Academic programme assessment policy and procedure (3AS06)
- The examination for a PhD has two stages. Firstly, the submission and preliminary assessment of the submission. Secondly, defence of the submission and response to examiners comments (possibly including oral examination).
- Examination for a Master's award consists of submission and examination of a thesis.
- Intention to submit a thesis must be communicated using form "PG4 Intention to submit Masters or PhD thesis" (4FAS06). Details are included in procedure for submission and assessment of Masters and PhD theses (3AS34).
- An extern and intern examiner will be appointed by the Registrar. Nominations of Intern and extern examiners for a thesis must be made using form "PG3 Nomination of external and internal examiners for higher degrees by thesis" (4FAS05). Details are included in procedure for submission and assessment of Masters and PhD theses (3AS34). The intern examiner will not be a supervisor of the student.
- QQI will be informed of the appointment of examiners (4FAS22).
- The Registrar shall ensure that external examiners are independent of the Institute and Sponsoring Establishment and that the same external examiner is not proposed so frequently that familiarity with the department might prejudice objective judgement.
- Where the student is on the permanent staff of the Institute, an additional external examiner will be appointed to replace the internal independent examiner.
- Submissions may be offered for examination in a temporary bound form, which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed. A submission presented in temporary bound form must be in its final form in all respects save the binding. The submission must be presented in a permanent binding of the approved type before the degree can be awarded.
- The Registrar shall send a copy of the submission to each examiner, together with the examiner's template report form (4FAS07) and the Institute's Regulations, and shall ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.
- Where the examiners recommend the award of the degree, the examiners' final recommendation form and a copy of the submission. (If the award of the degree is subject to amendments being made to the submission, the examiners' final recommendation form must be forwarded without delay and the submission and a note from the Head of School confirming that the submission has been amended.
- In any instance where the Registrar is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, the Registrar may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

- Actions and responsibilities for submission of a thesis and assessment procedures are documented in Procedure for submission and assessment of Masters and PhD theses (3AS34).

Oral examinations

- All PhD students are normally examined orally. Masters students may be examined orally on request from the student or examiners.
- The examination is on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where the reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause, research and post-graduate studies sub committee is satisfied that a student would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination, an alternative form of examination may be approved. Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the student's knowledge of the language in which the submission is presented is inadequate.
- Supervisors may, with the consent of the student, attend the oral examination but must withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.
- Prior to the oral examination, each examiner shall complete an independent preliminary report on the submission. The oral examination shall not take place until these have been submitted to the Registrar.
- Oral examinations are normally held in Ireland. However, in special cases the Registrar may give approval for the examination to take place abroad.
- The Registrar shall notify the student, all supervisors and the examiners of the date of the oral examination.
- Without delay following the oral examination the internal examiner shall forward the examiner's recommendations to the appropriate officer of the Institute accompanied by the following documentation:

Criteria for appointment of examiners

- Examiners must be experienced in research in the general area of the student's submission and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- At least one external examiner shall normally have experience of examining research degree students. In an examination for PhD, at least one external examiner shall normally have experience of PhD examining.
- An external examiner shall be independent of the Institute and the sponsoring establishments and shall not have acted previously as the student's supervisor or adviser.
- An external examiner shall not normally be either a supervisor of another student of the Institute or an external examiner on a taught course in the same department at the Institute/Sponsoring Establishment.
- Former members of staff or students of the Institute/Sponsoring Establishment should not be proposed as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment or period of study.
- No person who is registered for a research degree at the Institute at the same level may act as an examiner.

Duties of Examiners

- Each examiner shall read and examine the submission and present an independent written report on it to the Registrar. In completing the report, each examiner must consider whether

the submission provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as based on QQI standards for the appropriate QQI level).

- In the event of an oral examination, the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, present a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.
- The reports and recommendation of the examiners must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Academic Council to satisfy itself that the criteria for the award of the degree have been met.
- The Registrar will present reports of examiners to Academic Council for recommendation of award to be conveyed to QQI (if successful).

Outcomes of Examinations

- Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend:
 - that the student be awarded the degree.
 - that the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the submission; in such circumstances, the examiners must indicate to the student in writing what amendments and corrections are required. The amendments shall normally be submitted within six months. If examiners are satisfied that the student has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the student's submission requires some minor amendments and corrections not so substantial to call for the submission of a revised submission, they may recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the student amending the submission to the satisfaction of the Head of School. In such cases a statement certifying that the amendments and corrections made are satisfactory must be submitted with the recommendation of the examiners or as soon afterwards as possible. The statement must be signed and dated by the Head of School as decided by the examiners.
 - that the student be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination.
 - that the student be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined.
- Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, Academic Council may:
 - accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner)
 - accept the recommendation of the external examiner(s)
 - require the appointment of an additional external examiner, whose appointment will be proposed by the Registrar in the normal way. Where an additional external examiner is appointed he/she shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the submission and, if considered necessary, conduct an oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners
- A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be required. In such cases the approval of the Registrar must be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it must normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination. Any such examination is deemed to be part of the student's first examination.
- The examiners may not recommend that a student fail outright without holding an oral examination or other alternative examination.

- Where the Institute decides, on the recommendation of the examiners, that the degree is not awarded and no re-examination be permitted, the examiners must prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their decision, which will be forwarded to the student by the Institute.
- Where evidence of cheating or plagiarism in the preparation of the submission or other irregularities in the conduct of the examination come to light subsequent to the recommendation of the examiners, the Registrar shall consider the matter, if necessary in consultation with the examiners, and take the necessary action in accordance with the relevant Regulations of the Institute.

Re-examination

- In the case of a re-examination, the options available to the examiners are to recommend:
 - that the student be awarded the degree.
 - that the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments to the submission to the satisfaction of examiners.
 - that the student be not awarded the degree.
- One re-examination may be permitted by the Institute subject of the following requirements:
 - A student who fails to satisfy the examiners at the examination, including where appropriate the oral or approved alternative examination or any further examination or re-examination required may, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Registrar, be allowed to submit the thesis and be re-examined.
 - The examiners must provide the student, via the Institute, with written guidance on the deficiencies of the first submission.
 - The student must submit for re-examination within the period of one calendar year from the date of the latest part of the examination. The Registrar may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of this period. Where the Registrar has dispensed with the oral examination the re-examination shall take place within one calendar year of the date of this dispensation.
- An additional external examiner is appointed for the re-examination. Where the additional examiner is required her/his appointment must be submitted approval in the normal way.
- There are four forms of re-examination:
 - Where the student's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination or further examination was satisfactory, but the submission unsatisfactory and the examiners, on re-examination certify that the thesis as revised is satisfactory, the Institute may exempt the student from further examination, oral or otherwise.
 - Where on the first examination the student's submission was so unsatisfactory that the Registrar dispensed with the oral examination, any re-examination must include a re-examination of the submission and an oral or approved alternative examination.
 - Where on the first examination a student's submission is considered satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examinations does not satisfy the examiners the student may, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Registrar, be re-examined in the oral and/or other examinations, subject to the time limits prescribed above without being requested to revise and re-submit the submission.

- Where on the first examination the submission satisfies the examiners but the student's performance in relation to the other requirements for the award of the degree is not satisfactory, the examiner may propose instead a different form of re-examination to test the student's abilities. Such examination may take place only with the approval of the Registrar. No further re-examination is then permitted.

Examination board meeting

- An examination board meeting will be convened by the Registrar to consider the recommendation of internal and external examiners and make a recommendation to Academic Council and subsequently QQI (where authority for conferring awards has not been delegated) relating to granting of an award.
- The examination board will be chaired by an independent non-voting Chairperson. The Chairperson will be external to the Institute and independent of the postgraduate learner and School supporting the learner. The Chairperson will be responsible for attending the relevant examination board meeting /viva voce, communicating with the examiners to achieve consensus and reporting to QQI on the implementation of procedures for the assessment of research learners
- Copies of the examination broadsheet, internal and external examiners reports will be considered at the examination board meeting and returned to QQI after the meeting.

Appeals against examination decisions

- Students may in the circumstances set out below appeal against an examination decision, whether at the first examination or re-examination, and request a review of the examiners' recommendation.
- Appeals against the examination decision may be made using Institute procedure "Examination script inspection, and result recheck and appeals process" (3AS10)

Appeals against other decisions

- Appeals relating to other issues may be addressed using "Student Appeals Board" (3SS09).

Award of the Degree

- Decisions on the reports and recommendation of the examiners in respect of research degree students are the responsibility of the Academic Council. The power to confer the degree rests with QQI.

//ends