

PhD
Handbook for School of HISTORY and PHILOSOPHY
Academic Year 2026/2027

Dear Students,

Whether you are starting your Doctoral studies this year or are in second or subsequent years you are very welcome on campus this Autumn.

This Handbook is a guide to your PhD studies. It will be updated year on year and if necessary also in the course of an academic year. Its purpose is to give you the most important information you need for your studies in one place. The University Guidelines for PhD Studies is accessible [here](#).

This Handbook consists in the following:

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We hope to help your learning experience where we can and provide an exciting and stimulating year.

Best wishes,

Felix Ó Murchadha (Director of PhD studies,
Philosophy)

Enrico Dal Lago (Director of PhD studies,
History)

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PhD Student Rep. To be confirmed	

Orientation

New PhD students are required to attend all of the following:

1. the orientation session organised by the Graduate Studies Office (offered three times per annum)
2. the orientation session organised by the College (offered three times per annum)
3. any additional local induction sessions organised by Centres/Schools/disciplines/supervisors

Registration and Module Selection

PhD students must register online each academic year. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are correctly registered. You should contact reghelp@universityofgalway.ie, if your record is incorrect. Registration guides are available at: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/registration/how-to-register/>

All Structured PhD students normally complete 30 ECTS of modules within the first three years of their programme. Modules function on a Credit/No Credit basis at PhD level, and numeric marks will

not appear on the final degree transcript. Successful completion and examination of the research is the basis for the award of the degree.

The University Marks and Standards for Structured PhDs can be found [here](#).

GS535 Induction and Professional Development is a core 5 ECTS module for Structured PhD students in the College, and must be undertaken unless a derogation has been granted. Students select additional modules in consultation with their supervisor(s) and GRC in line with any other local requirements. Module registration is online and is completed by the student.

Further information on PhD module selection is available [here](#).

Personal Development Plans

Each incoming PhD student will agree a Personal Development Plan (PDP) with their supervisor(s). The PDP is put in place during the PhD student's first year of registration and must be completed prior to the first GRC meeting. Please note that many funders now require the completion of a PDP within the first six months of a PhD student's registration.

The PDP is a living document that should be reviewed and updated annually. Compliance is monitored via the GRC process. Relevant workshops and other resources on PDPs are available from the Researcher Development Centre, and all students registered in GS535 Induction and Professional Development will receive training. In instances where students are not registered for GS535 Induction and Professional Development (e.g. because they are pursuing a Traditional PhD), it is the responsibility of the supervisor(s) to ensure that they are aware of and engage with training opportunities and materials. A Guide to Personal Development Planning and a PDP template are provided as Appendix 1.

For students who began their studies prior to the 2023-24 academic year, PDPs are not strictly required, but are nonetheless strongly encouraged.

Research Integrity Training

'Research Integrity relates to the performance of research ... to the highest standards of professionalism and rigour, and to the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research record in publications and elsewhere' (<https://library.nuigalway.ie/openscholarship/researchintegrity/>).

All PhD students are required to complete training in Research Integrity during their first year of registration. This requirement must be fulfilled prior to the first GRC meeting, and compliance is monitored via the GRC process. All students who successfully fulfil the requirements for GS535 Induction and Professional Development will complete this training. In instances where students are not registered for GS535 Induction and Professional Development (e.g. because they are pursuing a Traditional PhD), it is the responsibility of the supervisor(s) to ensure that they are aware of and engage with an appropriate training option.

This requirement may be satisfied in any one of the following ways:

- (i) successful completion of the 5 ECTS module GS5110 Research Integrity
- (ii) successful completion of the 5 ECTS module SPA459 Research Ethics (subject to annual availability)

- (iii) submission of a certificate demonstrating the successful completion of core modules 1-8 from Epigeum's online training course on Research Integrity (for access to this online course, please email researchintegrity@nuigalway.ie)

This Research Integrity training requirement comes into effect for new PhD students registering in the 2023-24 academic year and thereafter. PhD students who began their programme of study prior to the 2023-24 academic year are not strictly required but are nonetheless strongly encouraged to engage with Research Integrity training opportunities.

Structured PhD

The Structured PhD is a four year programme full-time or a six year programme part-time. Its two main components are the thesis worth 330 ECTS and taught component worth 30ECTS.

The two main types of modules are:

- advanced discipline-specific modules and
- generic/transferrable/professional skills modules

Online resources (**Epigeum Research Skills**) are available via the Researcher Development Centre Portal [here](#) to support these modules.

Traditional PhD

The traditional PhD is a three year programme full-time or four year part-time. It is examined solely by dissertation.

Thesis

The PhD thesis (for both the structured and traditional PhD) should not normally exceed 80,000 words, inclusive of appendices, footnotes, tables and bibliography.

Practice-based PhD

Doctoral education by practice-based research provides students with an opportunity to contribute new knowledge to their area of practice. The PhD student's original contribution may be demonstrated by a combination of outputs (including but not limited to the creation of images, music, designs, models, digital media, text-based works, films, performances, or exhibitions) in conjunction with a substantive critical component that situates and appraises the literature, processes, and methods relevant to the project and provides a discursive analysis of the practice-based element(s). A practice-based thesis will be no less rigorous academically than a monograph-style thesis. It is important to note that only practice-based research that has been undertaken by the student while registered for the PhD is admissible. The decision of a student to avail of this thesis format, where available, should be made clear at the time of the student's application to and acceptance on the PhD programme. Normally, practice-based PhD projects will be co-supervised.

The length of the critical component must be between 30,000-60,000 words, with a precise quantity established for each PhD student with the agreement of the supervisor(s) and GRC. Ordinarily, word counts of fewer than 50,000 words will only be permissible where the practice results in the creation of a single large-scale output (e.g. a novel or a film) or in a cumulatively significant series of smaller-

scale outputs. Once established, the length of the critical component may only be revised only with the explicit approval of the supervisor(s) and GRC.

PhD modules available in School of History and Philosophy

The following modules are available to PhD students within the School of History and Philosophy:

History Modules:

HI503: Historical Debates and Controversies

HI6104: Making History: Evidence and Interpretation

HI6108: Everyday Lives: An Intimate History of Twentieth-Century Women

HI6106: Issues in Local History

HI6111: Representing Transatlantic Slavery: History and Memory

Philosophy Modules:

PI6110 Ethics and Artificial Intelligence

PI6113 Philosophy of Nature and Technology

PI6112 Self-directed Learning

On a case by case basis PhD students can take modules in other Schools. As with all taught components, this should be done with the agreement of the supervisor.

Role of Supervisor

The relationship with the supervisor is vital to the success of a PhD project. The supervisor is responsible for providing guidance on the research carried out by you as the PhD student. Supervisors will meet with their PhD students on a regular basis and be responsive to queries either by email or in person. Correspondence between supervisors and students should always adhere to the University of Galway Guidelines on email etiquette (see <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/goodemail/>). The expected frequency and purpose/format of supervisory meetings should be clarified between supervisors and supervisees; it is expected that these aspects will evolve as the student reaches different milestones in the PhD journey.

Role of Student

The research student is central to the Postgraduate Research in the School. Such prolonged engagement with a research topic is exciting and rewarding, but can also be daunting and lonely. Both Academic and Support Staff in the School and the University are here to help you reach the highest potential. Success in graduate research requires commitment, dedication and a willingness to accept constructive criticism and expert supervision. As is the case with the supervisor, students should always adhere to the University of Galway Guidelines on email etiquette (see <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/goodemail/>). All students should familiarise themselves with the code of conduct to be found at: <http://www.universityofgalway.ie/codeofconduct/>

Role of Graduate Research Committee (GRC)

The Graduate Research Committee (GRC) consists of a minimum of three members of academic staff. Supervisors are never members of their own students' GRCs. The GRC may be interdisciplinary, where appropriate, and may have more than the minimum three members. In addition, a GRC member may be from outside of the institution, where appropriate.

The GRC will be selected prior to your registration. It formally monitors your progress through an annual review process in line with national and international best practice. The GRC will meet with you annually, usually in April or May. Normally, these meetings are held in person. A minimum of three GRC members must be present for the meeting, and the supervisor(s) do not attend. If a GRC member is on leave or otherwise unavailable, they will be replaced by another academic to ensure that a minimum of three members are present for all annual GRC meetings.

Your supervisor will be able to tell you the identities of your GRC members and can facilitate introduction to them prior to your first annual meeting.

Prior to the annual meeting, both you as PhD student and the supervisor(s) submit reports (GS030 and GS040, respectively) to the GRC. You may decide to share a copy of your annual report with your supervisor(s) but are not required to do so and vice versa. Along with GS030, you may be required to submit supplementary documents to the GRC, as requested. This is particularly the case at the time of the mini-viva at the end of year 2 (see below).

It is normal practice for the PhD student to make a short oral report to the GRC, outlining their progress since the last meeting and their plans for the coming year. The annual GRC meeting process is strictly confidential, and the PhD student should feel free to discuss their relationship with their supervisor(s) or any other sensitive issues affecting progress.

Following the annual meeting, the GRC chair submits GS050 to the College, providing commentary on the PhD student's progress and indicating whether the student should: a) continue; b) continue with further review; c) transfer to another programme; or d) leave the Research Degree programme. GS050 is the only form officially submitted to and held by the College and should therefore incorporate and reflect any information supplied in GS030 and GS040 that the GRC has deemed relevant and significant to record.

The GRC chair liaises with the PhD supervisor(s) and supplies them with a copy of GS050 as soon as possible after the meeting. The chair should endeavour to draw any substantive points or concerns to the attention of the supervisor(s).

The PhD student should receive feedback from the GRC as soon as possible after the annual meeting and must be directly supplied with a copy of GS050.

When progress is not as expected, the GRC may request a plan from the PhD student and/or supervisor(s) to address the situation and the GRC chair will organise timely follow-up meetings, as required.

In exceptional cases, a student may wish to change supervisor. It is then the responsibility of the GRC to try to understand and resolve the issues that have arisen, including meeting the supervisor(s) and the PhD student individually. If the issues cannot be resolved, then the GRC should identify an alternative supervisory arrangement.

Mini-Viva

All PhD students in the College of Arts are required to do a mini-viva at the end of year two. This involves submitting 5000 words of a written text, a precis of their PhD, at an agreed date towards the end of the academic year on year 2 of their PhD (whether full-time or part-time). This written submission should consider the PhD's research project, its objectives, describe the methodology, evaluate the literature in the field and demonstrate the significance of the project's contribution to the research in their field; it is also permissible for the written submission to be a draft thesis chapter accompanied by an outline of the thesis, its aims and objectives. Part-time students are also required to do a mini-viva by the end of their second year but their written submission can be between 3,000 and 5,000 words. Towards the end of the academic year in second year, students will then present the main findings contained in their written submission in a 20 minute public presentation followed by questions for 10-15 minutes. This will normally take place around the same time as the GRC meeting in May-June.

Thesis submission

PhD theses are to be submitted in monograph form. The thesis should generally be no longer than 80,000 words. When submitting a soft bound thesis for examination, the thesis must be approved for examination according to the University Guidelines. The School requests that an electronic and paper version of the thesis is presented to the Chair of the GRC one week in advance of any submission deadline. An EOG 020 form should be presented with the thesis when seeking approval for examination.

PhD Viva

A Viva Voce examination must be carried out for all students undertaking the PhD degree. This oral examination follows an examination of the soft bound thesis performed by the external and internal examiners. The Viva examination is chaired by an independent academic appointed by the Chair of the discipline. The School of History and Philosophy fully implements the University regulations concerning the PhD Viva. An excellent guide is available for staff and students (see [Viva Guide \(English\)](#) ([Gaeilge](#))).

For practice-based PhDs it may be appropriate for a leading professional in the field of practice to act as joint examiner with a leading scholar. In instances where the practice-based element of the work is performance-based or otherwise ephemeral in nature, the examiner(s) shall be appointed six to eighteen months before the expected submission date of the written thesis in order to allow them to engage fully with the project.

It must be emphasised that examiners retain final judgement on the quality of the thesis.

Further information and support

Email. Periodic communications from your lecturers, Discipline, School, College and University are sent to registered students via their **universityofgalway.ie student email** accounts. For this reason, please check this email on a regular basis, and please use your University of Galway account, when possible, for contacting members of the university in any context.

Class Representative(s) will be selected at the beginning of the year. Do consider putting yourself forward as a class rep. This is a very useful way of communicating with the department, whereby wider course feedback, general issues or particular concerns can be recognised and dealt with quickly.

Student Registry Helpdesk: For replacement ID cards, exam transcripts, registration and custom statements, change of name/address, validation and stamping of forms, course withdrawal and lost and found, see [Student Registry Helpdesk](#).

University policies and procedures relating to students: For information on anti-bullying policy for students; alcohol policy; supports for students experiencing pregnancy, maternity and paternity; authorised absences; drug policy; student sexual harassment policy; mental health strategy; student code of conduct and other university policies relating to students, see <http://www.universityofgalway.ie/student-services/policies/>

The College Library: The James Hardiman Library is located in the Hardiman Research Building. For further information, see <http://library.universityofgalway.ie/>

The Student Union: <http://su.universityofgalway.ie/>

We all need help sometimes: do get in touch with these services if you have a relevant query, or need specific advice or support from these services. If you feel stressed, depressed, or not yourself in some way, consider contacting the University Counselling Service (for details see below).

Disability Support Services

NUI Galway positively values the participation of students who have a disability, illness or specific learning difficulty and promotes a university experience of the highest quality for all students. The Disability Support Service promotes inclusive practices throughout the campus community, and we are committed to the provision of an equitable learning environment that will enable all students to become independent learners and highly skilled graduates. For further information see: <http://www.universityofgalway.ie/disability/>

Disability Support Service is located on the first floor of Áras Ui Chathail, Room AUC1004. If you would like to contact someone in the Disability Support Service team, please choose from the options below:

- General queries: disabilityservice@universityofgalway.ie or telephone: 353 (0) 91 492813
- DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) queries: access@universityofgalway.ie or telephone: 353 (0) 91 492106
- Assistive Technology queries: disabilityservice@universityofgalway.ie or telephone: 353 (0)91 492744

Further contact details of staff of the service are available on the website.

Student Counselling Service

This service is available to all full and part-time registered students at University of Galway, undergraduate and postgraduate. Each year, between 800 and 900 students have contact with the service. These include students who have come from school to college, mature students,

international students and students with disabilities. Students can book appointments but there are also drop-in opportunities. The service's website also includes some self-help materials. For a list of FAQs see <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/counsellors/faqs/>. The service is located in 5 Distillery Road; when coming into college from Newcastle Road (Distillery Road entrance by AIB), it is on the right-hand side in a two-storey house. For further information and updates see <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/counsellors/>

Direct Tel: 091 492484

Ext.: 2482

E-mail: counselling@universityofgalway.ie

Semester dates

Academic year 2026/27	
Start of teaching	Monday, 7 th September 2026
End of teaching	Friday, 27 th November 2026 (12 weeks of teaching)
2026	
Start of teaching	Monday, 11 th January 2027
End of teaching	Friday, 2 nd April 2027 (12 weeks of teaching)

Canvas

Familiarity with our Virtual Learning Environment Canvas is essential. Course pages on Canvas will also contain all notes, PowerPoint slides, further reading and communications from lecturers. Your courses also all require submission of materials through Canvas. You must be properly registered in order to access Canvas. Learning to work with Canvas is the responsibility of individual students, but support services are available on campus. Follow this [link](#) for more information on Canvas and how to make the most of its services.

Appendix 1

Guide to Personal Development Planning for Research Students

University of Galway Researcher Development Centre

This guide will help you to self-evaluate your skills, abilities and competencies and to write a Personal Development Plan (PDP). Your PDP will include concrete actions to promote your professional development, through training and other development activities. Writing a PDP will help you to make the most of your time as a PhD student and avail of a range of training and resources available to you in the University of Galway. Having a PDP can also help you to plan more productive meetings with your supervisor(s) and GRC.

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE SELF-ASSESSMENT

In the table below we refer to the [PhD Graduate Skills as outlined by the IUA](#):¹



¹ To provide a more comprehensive guide we also used some elements of 2019 version of the Graduate Skills Statement.

The table below will help you to self-assess your skills, abilities and competencies and to identify your strengths, weaknesses and areas in need of development. We recommend that you discuss this exercise with your supervisor. Start by evaluating your current skills, abilities and competencies in each of the areas listed in column one.

Follow these steps:

- 1) Rate your current level for each skill/ability/competency from 1 to 5, where: 5 = highly proficient, 4 = proficient, 3 = adequate, 2 = you have some knowledge/experience and 1 = you have no knowledge/experience. Write down your current level in column 2.
- 2) After you have assessed your current level, identify which skills/abilities/competencies are important for the completion of your PhD and for your professional development. Note that not all skills/abilities/competencies will be equally important for all PhD researchers, depending on your discipline, project and career aspirations. Are you sufficiently proficient in all areas that are important to you and your project? Fill out the third column (Action/Training Needed) to indicate where you need to work on a specific skill/ability/competency.
- 3) If an action/training is required, in what semester(s) in your PhD should such action/training take place (e.g. year 1, semester 2 etc.)? Fill out column 4 accordingly.

	Current Level	Action/Training Needed? (Y/N)	When (year/semester)
Exhibit knowledge of advances and developments in your field			
Demonstrate knowledge of research in related fields and disciplines			
Comprehend and effectively employ appropriate research methodologies			
Critically analyse and synthesise new and complex information from diverse sources, applying innovative scientific literacy skills			
Demonstrate excellence in data management planning			
Formulate and apply solutions to research problems and effectively interpret research results			

Demonstrate, where appropriate, a knowledge of health and safety procedures and their application in the research environment			
Have a broad awareness and knowledge of key relevant funding sources and grant application procedures			
Implement strategies to ensure effective project and time management, constantly monitoring timelines, deliverables and adapting flexibly in order to maintain progress			
Knowledge of intellectual property and know-how			
Using social media, mobile applications and other online platforms to assist in the collating, coding, and analysis of data for their research			
Career management	Current Level	Action/Training Needed? (Y/N)	By when (year/semester)
Demonstrate an awareness of transferable skills and their applicability to both academic and non-academic positions and how they are applied in different circumstances			
Take ownership of their own career management, forming credible career plans			
Initiate and sustain networks and relationships that may encourage opportunities for employment			
Present themselves and their skills, attributes,			

experiences and qualifications, through effective job applications, CVs and interviews			
Understand the broadest possible range of their employment opportunities			
Ethics and social understanding	Current Level	Action/Training Needed? (Y/N)	By when (year/semester)
Understand, and apply in your research, principles of ethical conduct of research, including avoidance of plagiarism, allocation of credit and authorship and definitions of research misconduct			
Understand the relevance of research in society and the potential impact of research on individuals, groups and society where applicable			
Understand and apply the relevant guidelines for the ethical conduct of research involving people, human tissue and animals			
Demonstrate advanced understanding of principles of research integrity, and the ability to apply those principles and carry out research in a manner that allows universities and wider society to have confidence and trust in the methods used and the findings and conclusions that result from that research			
Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of Open Scholarship principles			
Demonstrate awareness of issues of equality and diversity and their role and value in research activities			
Communication skills	Current Level	Action/Training Needed? (Y/N)	By when (year/semester)
Demonstrate effective writing and publishing skills through submission of peer-reviewed			

articles, reviews and conference proceedings			
Effectively use and decide on appropriate forms and levels of communication for the benefit of public engagement			
Communicate and explain research to diverse audiences, including both specialist and non-specialist			
Effectively support the learning of other students when involved in teaching and demonstrating			
Effectively use social media to enhance accessibility of research activities			
Personal effectiveness transferrable skills	Current Level	Action/Training Needed? (Y/N)	By when (year/semester)
Demonstrate strong critical thinking, with skills in identifying, analysing, evaluating, and making inferences from arguments proffered and evidence produced to support those arguments			
Work in an independent and self-directed manner, showing initiative to accomplish clearly defined goals, monitoring timelines, deliverables, managing stakeholders, mitigating risk and overcoming setbacks			
Demonstrate excellent data management skills, informed by legislative requirements (e.g., GDPR, 2018) and frameworks, such as FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) Principles			
Understand key rhetorical skills, including how to persuade others of a viewpoint's merits, demonstrating and communicating credible suggestions to achieve one's aims			
Understand the importance of initiating new projects, proactively			

reacting to newly identified needs or aiming to resolve persistent problems			
Demonstrate effective budgeting and financial management skills, managing budgets to support attainment of objectives and planning and monitoring future income and expenditure			
Demonstrate the ability to identify and appropriately manage risks, both within their research and in their other professional activities			
Reflect on experiences in a critical manner and act on such in a cycle of self-improvement			
Team-working and leadership	Current Level	Action/Training Needed? (Y/N)	By when (year/semester)
Demonstrate the ability to develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and work in a collaborative environment			
Demonstrate awareness of their own working style and that of others, and how they interact			
Understand leadership in team environments, recognising the strengths of team members and how to work effectively to achieve mutual goals			
Ability to oversee, coach and motivate team-members, fostering a co-operative and solution-driven working environment			
Ability to understand feedback of different kinds, taking suggestions on board when appropriate			
Ability to network effectively within and beyond the organisation, nationally and internationally, and across discipline and sectoral boundaries			

Demonstrate intercultural awareness, with the capacity to interact between numerous cultural frames of reference			
Entrepreneurship & innovation	Current Level	Action/Training Needed? (Y/N)	By when (year/semester)
Understand the role of innovation and creativity in research			
Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of Intellectual property issues, appreciate and, where appropriate, contribute to knowledge exchange			
Appreciate the skills required for the development of entrepreneurial enterprises in the public and private sectors			
Understand different cultural environments, including the business world, and the contribution that knowledge transfer can make to society			

CREATING AND REVIEWING YOUR PDP

In the table above, you reflected on your skills/abilities/competencies, and identified where an action/training is needed. Now select the skills where you indicated that an action/training is needed for the current academic year. Include these skills/abilities/competencies in the PDP template below, and fill out the rest of the table by indicating what action/training you will take to improve each skill/ability/competency, and schedule when such action/training will take place.

If possible, you and your supervisor(s) should discuss and keep reviewing your PDP. It may be useful to ask your supervisor(s) for a specific meeting to start discussing your PDP, and to schedule follow-on meetings to review (agree the frequency of these PDP meetings with your supervisor). You should fill out the form below in advance of the meetings. Make sure to review both the skills/abilities table above and your PDP template at each PDP meeting. This will help you to structure discussions, track your progress and make sure you avail of all the training you need during the course of your PhD

Personal Development Plan (PDP) for [YEAR]

Name of Research Student:

Name of Supervisor:

PDP Meeting's Date:

Skill/Ability/Competency in need of development	What action/s are required to develop it? If training is needed, identify suitable course/source and how to register	When will this action/training be completed?