

Postgraduate Research Students, University of Galway

National Student Survey

School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

2025 Action Plan

Overall, the School of LLC is pleased with the Postgraduate Research scores received, however because of low numbers of LLS PhD students responding to the survey, we did not get specific feedback and therefore went by the satisfaction rates reported for the CASSCS in total.

		Actions	Responsible	Status* November 2025
1	Research Infrastructure and Facilities	Scores here are generally good. PG students have their own desk space in the Hardiman Building. What we are planning to improve is to build a common room for researchers in the corridor of the Arts Millennium building to facilitate collaboration, networking and frequent access to researchers in adjacent areas.	HoS	In progress
2	Supervision	No actions are planned here as very high satisfaction rates were reported; PhDs students responded that they a) were provided with the appropriate level of support by their supervisor, b) had regular and appropriate contact with their supervisor, c) received appropriate feedback on their research from their supervisor, and d) were helped by their supervisor to identify training and development needs.	N/A	N/A
3	Research Culture	We have introduced Researcher coffee mornings (approximately 2 per semester) where PhD students and their supervisors as well as early career researchers can regularly meet socially and discuss where there is further potential for collaboration and peer support. PG students are also involved in event planning and organisation (unfortunately we can only offer vouchers as tokens of recognition). As a result, we are all now more familiar with each other, know PhD students of other disciplines within the School by name and research area and could therefore improve the sense of belonging.		Complete, and will be continued
4	Progress and Assessment	PhD students rarely complete within the 4 year time frame and we hope that the the new requirement of a mini-viva will help us to give PG students a better sense of direction and also catch significant problems early enough to address them in time to still enable timely completion. LLC however has a not insignificant number of international PG students, and for them handing in their hardcopy comes with an expiry of their visa, which disincentivises early completion. For this group, sick leave also causes major problems as they cannot take a leave of absence without losing their right to stay in Ireland. Stopping the clock is too high of a risk for them, which can lead to non-completion within the 4 year time frame. We have brought this issue to the VP Graduate studies.	HOS VP Graduate Studies	In Progress

5	Research Skills	Satisfaction scores in this area were 83-100% and, based on these results, we do not see a need for any actions in this domain	N/A	N/A
6	Other Transferable Skills	Many of our previous PhD students work in fields other than Academia or in the Research Support Sector. We plan to extend informal contacts and meetings between them and our current PG cohorts into more regular career roundtable discussions.	HOS Supervisors	In Progress
7	Responsibilities and Supports	There is a widespread assumption that counselling services are only in place for Undergraduate students, especially among students who only joined University of Galway for their PG degree. We have taken a more active approach of making PG students aware of existing supports. We have also included PhD students in all School Committees and the recent Athena Swan SAT, so they are now also carrying more responsibilities in a participatory way.	HOS	Completed
8	Personal Outlook	There is huge difference between unfunded and funded PhD students. Unfunded PhDs are under pressure to work long hours, as well as completing their research, which results in work-life balance stress and makes timely completion almost impossible, especially for those in a part time degree in combination with full time work. But also funded PhD students suffer from financial stress since even the increased scholarship rates do not keep up with increasing rents. This affects international students even more, as they typically pay higher rents and are vulnerable to scams or housing discrimination. Informally many staff members have helped out students in those situations, but this is not a responsibility that can be put on staff in an official document.		In Progress
9	Funding	All funding schemes have become more competitive and Graduate Teaching opportunities are small and only available at tutorial pay rates, so funding remains an issue that we cannot solve.		
10	Development Opportunities	The School Research Committee is offering writing retreats open to staff and PG students, as well as an annual Research Day, where one slot in each panel is reserved for a PhD student to present their research project and receive feedback. Supervisors also encourage students to take structured PhD modules in line with their development goals and have been reminded to direct their students to the Careers Advisory Service.	Chair of Research committee, supervisors	Complete and ongoing
11	Motivations	We see no reason for action here	N/A	N/A
12	Career	See point 6, transferrable skills	N/A	N/A
13	Overall Experience	Financial pressures-housing crisis aside, we think we have made a significant effort to improve the sense of belonging, career trajectory and integration of PG students into the School as a Unit. We have also improved our student numbers in 2025, so that hopefully in the next survey we can get more specific data on how LLC scores in comparison to other Schools in CASSCS		

Tina-Karen Pusse

Director of Doctoral Studies LLC, October 31, 2025