



## College of Business, Public Policy and Law Local Guidelines on the Operationalisation of QA245 for PhDs

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### 1. Introduction

QA245, the University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes, contains information and regulations relevant to all research postgraduates at the University of Galway. This document is intended to serve as a ‘local’ supplement to QA245. As such, it contains additional information specific to the College of Business, Public Policy and Law (CBPPL) and offers guidance on how University-wide policies and procedures are to be operationalised for PhD students.

The information in this document applies to both ‘Structured’ and ‘Non-Structured’ PhDs in the College. The Structured PhD is a formalised, integrated programme of research, training, and personal and professional development activities. Structured PhDs are the standard model for doctoral education within the University of Galway and include at least 30 ECTS credits of structured modules and training. Registration for the Non-Structured PhD, where structured modules and training are not undertaken, is available only on an exceptional basis and requires approval from the Executive Dean of the College.

A diversity of research methodologies and approaches are employed across the College. Local adaptations of University and College policies are reflected in discipline and research centre handbooks and policy documents that contain additional information specific to individual Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas. PhD students and supervisors are therefore advised to also be aware of such norms and resources. Where discipline or centre handbooks or policies provide additional or more specific guidance, these operate alongside these College guidelines and should be read as complementary rather than as requiring amendment of this document.

In terms of the governance and support structures for PhD programmes, students, and supervisors, the Vice-Dean for Graduate Studies works with and for the Executive Dean of the College in the development of College policy on graduate studies and acts with the Dean's authority in the delivery of that policy. The Vice-Dean also works closely with the Associate Heads of Graduate Studies in the School of Business & Economics and the School of Law, who have responsibility for overseeing and delivering School-level policy and initiatives. The Associate Heads, in turn, work closely with the various discipline and research centre PhD Programme Directors/Leads in relation to the design and delivery of PhD programmes. The College Office provides a range of administrative and other supports.

## **2. Applications and Admission**

### ***2.1 Criteria, Decision-Making, and Review***

PhD applications are considered through a structured admissions process in accordance with University and College requirements. The format and content of PhD proposals must comply with the requirements set out by the relevant School, programme, and/or disciplinary area. Recommendations on admission are made by admissions committees operating at School or disciplinary level, with committee membership determined at School level. Admission decisions are based on the admission criteria for the relevant PhD programme, the quality and feasibility of the PhD proposal, and supporting documentation required for applications, including references, etc. Where an admissions committee identifies concerns with a PhD proposal, but the applicant otherwise meets the admission criteria for the programme, formative feedback should be provided to the proposed supervisor(s), and the applicant should be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit the proposal for further consideration by the committee. In exceptional circumstances, where a PhD applicant or proposed supervisor(s) wishes to request a review of a decision not to recommend admission, a review may be undertaken by the relevant Head of School, the Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Executive Dean of the College.

### ***2.2 PhD International Merit Scholarship***

Non-EU students who apply to undertake PhD studies at the University of Galway are advised that the full PhD fee (often called the "non-EU fee") will be charged. Non-EU students who

are not in receipt of any other scholarship or similar funding award that supports the payment of full non-EU fees are eligible for the PhD International Merit Scholarship Scheme. If successful, this scholarship award reduces the fee of the successful PhD student from the full non-EU PhD fee to EU student fees.

### **3. PhD Supervision**

The roles and responsibilities of PhD supervisors are outlined in detail in QA245. PhD students may have a single supervisor or multiple co-supervisors. In all cases of co-supervision, a primary supervisor must be designated. It is permitted for co-supervisors to be sourced from outside of the institution, where appropriate. Academics should normally refrain from taking on sole supervisory roles when they are within five years of retirement.

Supervisors will meet with 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 anticipated that these aspects will evolve as the student reaches different milestones in the PhD journey.

PhD supervisors who have not supervised a PhD to successful completion are required to attend supervisory training prior to or during their first year of supervising. Suitable training is organised by the Researcher Development Centre (RDC) and Graduate Studies Office and details can be found at <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/graduate-studies/staff/researchsupervision/>.

It is good practice for PhD students to keep records of formal meetings with their supervisor(s). This means that they will be able to trace the history of how their project developed over time. These records may also help to prevent misunderstandings and will assist with reminding both supervisor(s) and supervisee of deadlines agreed, action points to be taken, or issues to follow up. It is up to individual supervisors and supervisees to determine what sort of record keeping system will work best for them. A sample Supervision Record Form is presented in Appendix 1.

## **4. The Graduate Research Committee**

### ***4.1 GRC Membership***

Information on the composition of Graduate Research Committees (GRCs) is outlined in detail in QA245. The GRC must be made up of a minimum of three members of academic staff and responsibility for identifying and seeking the agreement of proposed GRC members rests with the supervisor(s) as part of the PhD application process. Supervisors are never members of their own students' GRCs. The GRC may be interdisciplinary and may have more than the

minimum three members. A GRC member may be sourced from outside of the institution, where appropriate. Where an external or interdisciplinary member is appointed, this should be for a clear academic purpose, such as subject-matter expertise, methodological input, or to support interdisciplinary research. In situations where a supervisor has not yet supervised a PhD to completion, at least one member of the GRC must be an experienced supervisor. This is also recommended in cases where a supervisor has supervised a PhD to completion, when possible.

#### ***4.2 GRC Procedures***

Comprehensive details about the roles and responsibilities of GRCs are provided in QA245. In accordance with this policy, the GRC will meet each PhD student 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) does not attend. If a GRC member is on leave or otherwise unavailable, a replacement GRC member must be sourced to ensure that a minimum of three members are present for all annual meetings. Each GRC will have a designated chair who is responsible for finalising and submitting the annual GS050 form and undertaking other correspondence on behalf of the committee.

Supervisor(s) should make incoming PhD students aware of the identities of their GRC members as early as possible and facilitate introductions, as students may wish to have contact prior to their first annual meeting.

In advance of the annual meeting, both the PhD student and supervisor(s) submit reports (GS030 and GS040, respectively) to the GRC. Along with GS030, the PhD student may be required to submit supplementary documents to the GRC, as locally requested by Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas.

It is normal practice for the PhD student to make a short oral report to the GRC, describing their progress since the last meeting and their plans for the coming year. At the discretion of Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas, this oral report may be delivered in public. All other aspects of the annual GRC meeting process are strictly confidential, and the PhD student should feel free to discuss their relationship with their supervisor(s) or any other sensitive issues affecting progress.

The GRC will confirm that the student has completed the requirements for the structured modules for which they are registered and that 30 ECTS credits of structured modules have been completed by the end of year 3.

Following the annual meeting, the GRC chair submits GS050 to the College Office. 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. In addition, 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 also receive feedback from the GRC as soon as possible after the annual meeting and must be directly supplied with a copy of GS050.

When annual progress is not as expected, the GRC may request an action 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.

#### ***4.3 The GRC's Role in Supervisory Changes***

In line with QA245, the GRC chair should make clear to the student that the annual GRC meeting is an opportunity to raise any concerns about supervision or progress in good faith and without fear of detriment to their academic standing. 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. Relevant Head(s) of School must be informed of any supervisory changes. In addition, the Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and relevant School-level roles such as the Associate Head of Graduate Studies and Programme Director/Lead, and where applicable the Head of Discipline or Centre Director, should also be informed of supervisory changes as a matter of good practice and oversight. If a new supervisor comes from a different discipline or School, the student's registration data should be updated to ensure that FTEs are allocated correctly. It is crucial that the College be appraised of all changes in supervisory arrangements to ensure that this is accurately reflected in relevant records.

### **5. Problem Resolution and Leave of Absence**

#### ***5.1 Problem Resolution***

When issues arise that significantly impact a PhD student's research, they should be addressed as early as possible, preferably in an informal way. The student should, in the first instance, search for solutions locally (i.e. discuss with supervisor(s), followed by the GRC, followed by the PhD Programme Director, Discipline/Centre Head, Associate Head of Graduate Studies, Head of School, and/or the Vice Dean for Graduate Studies). If necessary, the Head of School or Vice Dean for Graduate Studies can decide to escalate an issue to the Dean of the College and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

PhD students should also be aware of the availability of representatives from the Students Union, College administrators, Student Counselling, and other services. Finally, students have the right to make a formal complaint to the Dean of Students, following University of Galway procedures.

## ***5.2 Leave of Absence and Retrospective Leave***

At times, it may become necessary for a research student to take a leave of absence from their programme. This may arise for health reasons or other serious personal circumstances. A leave of absence is a formally approved period during which the student's registration is paused. A leave of absence will not normally be granted for any period longer than one year and must be for a minimum period of more than one month. During an approved leave of absence, the student's registration period is paused. This means that time spent on approved leave does not count towards the maximum period of registration. Where applicable, associated funding is also paused for the duration of the approved leave. Students seeking a leave of absence must complete the official University of Galway Application Form (GS080) for Leave of Absence (Research Graduate Students). The form must be signed by the student and includes a recommendation from the Supervisor and the Head of School before submission to the College for decision. Students are strongly advised to apply in advance of the proposed leave period wherever possible. Retrospective leave of absence may be considered only in exceptional circumstances, for example where illness or other serious personal difficulties prevented a timely application. In such cases, clear supporting documentation will normally be required. The form is available from the Graduate Studies website.

## **6. PhD Timelines and Milestones**

The full-time Structured PhD degree is designed to be completed within four years and the part-time Structured PhD within six years. In cases where the work continues beyond the expected timeframe, it is recommended that the GRC meet the PhD student more frequently in order to guide them to timely completion.

Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas should develop local guidelines outlining milestones that students are normally expected to achieve in each year of their PhD journey. This information should be included in relevant local handbooks. Appendix 2 contains a sample list of PhD milestones that may be adapted locally in accordance with disciplinary norms and individual circumstances.

## **7. Starting the PhD**

### ***7.1 Orientation***

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

- (i) University-wide orientation organised by the Graduate Studies Office (offered three times per annum);
- (ii) College induction organised by the College (offered three times per annum);
- (iii) Any additional local inductions organised by Schools/disciplines/centres/supervisors.

Details about University and College orientations and inductions will be sent to students in advance of commencing their studies.

## **7.2 Registration and Module Selection**

PhD students must register online each academic year. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are correctly registered. Students should contact [reghelp@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:reghelp@universityofgalway.ie) if their 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.

All students must register for (i) thesis code (programme/discipline identifier), plus (ii) any generic GS modules approved by their supervisor, plus (iii) any other modules approved by their supervisor (and module owner in the case of a taught module), plus (iv) a research component. While supervisors advise on and approve appropriate module selection, responsibility for accurate and timely registration ultimately rests with the PhD student.

### **(i) Thesis Codes (choose one only) – ECTS 0**

#### School of Business & Economics

AY650	Accounting
EC650	Economics
MG650	Management
MK650	Marketing
MS650	Business Information Systems

#### School of Law

LW650	Law
LW610	Disability Law and Policy
LW651	Human Rights

#### Shannon College

SC650	Shannon College
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### **(ii) Generic (Graduate Studies) Modules (5 ECTS each)**

A full list with details of the syllabus and learning outcomes for each module is available at: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/graduate-studies/currentstudents/gsmodes/gsmodes/>.

### **(iii) Modules available within the College**

See Appendix 3 for a list of PhD modules available in CBPPL. In addition to the PhD-specific modules, all taught LLM modules are open to PhD students in the School of Law, subject to the consent of the module owner and provided the student has not taken the course before. Students must register online for their selected modules as follows:

1. Go to Online Registration <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/registration/>
2. Login to Online Registration
3. Select My Courses

### **Canvas 1GST1**

All students will be automatically registered for the Canvas module 1GST1 Graduate Studies Training, where general information on Graduate Studies at University of Galway is provided.

### ***7.3 Personal Development Plans***

Each incoming PhD student will develop a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and review it with their supervisor(s). The PDP is intended as a developmental, student-owned planning tool to support progression and skills development, rather than as an evaluative or assessment mechanism. Students and supervisors are encouraged to engage meaningfully with the process as part of supporting researchers' transition into professional life. It is put in place during the PhD student's first year of registration and must be developed 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 RDC. A Guide to Personal Development Planning and a PDP template can be found on the RDC portal: [https://nuigalwayie.sharepoint.com/sites/rdc/SitePages/Personal-Development-Planning-\(PDP\).aspx](https://nuigalwayie.sharepoint.com/sites/rdc/SitePages/Personal-Development-Planning-(PDP).aspx).

### ***7.4 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. 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. For more information, see <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/researchcommunityportal/researchintegrity/>.

## 8. The ‘Mini-Viva’

All full-time and part-time PhD students are required to undergo a ‘Mini-Viva’ process within two or three years of initial registration respectively. The purpose of the Mini-Viva is to support a formative, developmental assessment of the PhD student’s research design, progress, and preparedness for doctoral study. It is not intended to be a summative assessment or examination of completed work, but rather an opportunity for structured feedback and guidance at an early stage of the PhD, and to provide the student with experience of responding to questions from subject experts and articulating their research aims, approach, and emerging contribution.

The Mini-Viva is organised and conducted by the GRC. Individual Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas have the discretion to decide the point within the first two years (or first three years for part-time students) at which the Mini-Viva will be held, noting that practice should be consistent for all PhD students in that School, programme, and/or disciplinary area.

The Mini-Viva process involves the PhD student’s advance submission of written work. The nature of this written submission is determined locally by the relevant School, programme, and/or disciplinary area, with specifications communicated to the PhD student at the programme’s outset and clearly articulated in relevant handbooks. Normally, the written submission will take one of the following forms:

- (i) A Mini-Viva report (Appendix 4 contains a description of the components that might be included in such a report); or,
- (ii) A written submission of another nature (e.g. journal article or thesis chapter), as determined by and appropriate to the discipline. In such cases, a shortened ‘synthesis report’ of approximately 1,000 words should also be submitted. This should include, for example, an overview of the PhD, the context and relevance of the research, the student’s research plan, and/or other material as appropriate to the discipline.

This submission of written material is complemented by the PhD student’s oral delivery of a formal presentation on their project’s overarching aims, approach, and design. This presentation may be held in public (e.g. as part of a Graduate Research Day event). The oral presentation must be followed by a substantive question period (i.e. ‘examination’). This format will allow GRC members to meaningfully engage with and offer constructive commentary on various aspects of the PhD student’s preliminary research plans. The recommended duration of a Mini-Viva is a minimum of 45 and a maximum of 90 minutes (inclusive of any student presentation at the Mini-Viva).

By agreement, a Mini-Viva may optionally replace one annual GRC meeting, provided that the PhD student is additionally offered the opportunity to confidentially discuss any other concerns arising with the GRC, should they so desire. In cases where the Mini-Viva is replacing an annual GRC meeting, the completion and submission of GS030, GS040, and GS050 remain compulsory.

The Mini-Viva process will help the PhD student to confirm that they:

- (i) have a clearly defined and realistically scoped research plan and schedule;
- (ii) are aware of relevant literature and methodologies;
- (iii) have demonstrated capability to conduct independent research to a high standard.

## **9. Article-Based Theses**

### ***9.1 Overview***

In some Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas, the PhD thesis may be based on published articles. An article-based thesis will be no less rigorous academically than a monograph-style thesis. In line with QA245, only articles based on research that has been undertaken by the student while registered for the PhD are admissible. The decision of a student to avail of this thesis format, where available, should be made in accordance with the norms of the discipline and with the agreement of the supervisor(s) and GRC.

### ***9.2 Relevance to Disciplines within the College***

It is recognised that article-based PhDs are not equally relevant to all Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas within the College. Certain disciplines or sub-disciplines are more likely to encounter greater take-up of this format among their doctoral students. There is no obligation on any School, programme, and/or disciplinary area within the College to offer article-based PhDs or to promote the article-based format over the monograph-style thesis format.

### ***9.3 School Guidelines for Article-Based Theses***

According to QA245, an article-based PhD is based on a collection of papers/articles (including published papers or papers submitted and accepted for publication) which describe a coherent programme of research undertaken by the student while registered for the PhD. In this format, a number of research articles written by the student while registered for the PhD, either published or accepted for publication, are presented with an introductory chapter, explanation of the research question, relevant literature and methodology and a concluding chapter. The student's contribution to each article must be made explicit.

A minimum number of articles, based on disciplinary norms, should make up the core of an article-based PhD thesis.

#### ***9.3.1 School of Business & Economics***

The article-based PhD format is available to registered students on full or part-time PhD programmes within the School of Business & Economics. Students wishing to undertake and

submit an article-based PhD must adhere to the University guidelines and to the following guidelines drawn up by the School of Business & Economics.

#### Subject matter of published articles

It is expected that the articles presented shall deal with the same research question or set of linked questions. A detailed discussion of each paper and the context and relationship of the work described in each, so that the overall research contribution is clear to GRC members and examiners, is expected.

#### Number of peer-reviewed articles required

A minimum of three original, full-length research articles relevant to the discipline in question is required. One of the articles should have been accepted for publication in a highly regarded, international, peer-reviewed journal in the discipline field. The other articles must be suitable for publication in highly regarded peer-reviewed journals in the discipline field. It is important to note that these requirements represent necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for the award of a PhD following submission of an article-based thesis.

In line with University guidelines, only articles which are based on research that has been undertaken by the student while registered for the PhD are admissible.

The PhD candidate should be responsible for the major research contribution of the work. Three joint publications may be included but the candidate must be the primary (first) author on at least two of these.

The candidate must make explicit their contribution relative to that of any co-authors and make clear the role of the co-author(s). Where a peer PhD candidate is a co-author, the role of each PhD candidate must be clearly distinguished and normally only one may claim primary authorship.

Articles that are accepted for publication are counted towards the minimum, provided suitable evidence of acceptance is provided. As conference papers typically describe preliminary research findings and are subject to less rigorous peer review, these may be included in the thesis to show the progression of the research contribution, but do not count to the minimum of three articles. In addition, articles that have been published in non peer-reviewed journals or as book chapters may be included in the thesis, but do not count to the minimum of three.

#### Structure of the article-based PhD

As per the University Guidelines, in addition to the minimum requirement of three articles, the article-based PhD must also contain an introductory chapter, explanation of the research question, relevant literature and methodology, a concluding chapter, and full bibliography:

- An introductory chapter will locate the candidate's work within the existing scholarship. This chapter will explicitly articulate the key research question(s) addressed by the candidate and the chosen methodological/theoretical framework, as appropriate;

- A literature review chapter may be included if a thorough critical review of previous scholarship and literature on the topic is not comprehensively addressed in the three articles;
- A chapter corresponding to each of the three articles;
- A concluding chapter, which draws the substantive material in the articles together so as to demonstrate their coherence and the full extent of their contribution to knowledge;
- A full bibliography.

#### Process and time limit on PhD format selection

The format of thesis presentation (monograph or article-based) will be decided jointly between the primary supervisor and student and as advised by the GRC. Selection of format can be at any stage of the PhD and the student can revert back to the traditional monograph at any time.

Note that the decision to opt for a published article-based PhD should not be based solely on meeting the minimum criteria. A monograph has the advantage of more readily supporting the development of a sustained argument, with the synthesis of the relevant literature and an integrated discussion of the methodology to clearly demonstrate the candidate's contribution to knowledge in their field. The articles and supplementary chapters incorporated into an article-based PhD must achieve the same end.

#### Role of the GRC

To advise the student/supervisor.

#### The PhD examination process

The article-based PhD is examined in the usual way as per University Guidelines. Irrespective of publication, the University examination process is the ultimate assessment of the quality of the article-based thesis.

The candidate must demonstrate that in pursuance of article-based PhD, they have met all of the following criteria:

- Has made a significant contribution to knowledge and scholarship;
- Has demonstrated a capacity for original and critical thought;
- Can display an appropriate depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding of the relevant field(s) of study in the thesis and at the viva examination;
- Has gained significant expertise with respect to basic and advanced methodologies and techniques;
- Has presented a thesis with the appropriate structure and written style;
- Has completed work that is suitable for publication.

Evidence as to whether or not these criteria are met is found in the thesis, but the oral examination or viva is critical to confirmation that the required standards have been achieved.

### *9.3.2 School of Law*

Students in the School of Law wishing to undertake an article-based PhD will be subject to the University guidelines, as outlined in section 6.2.6 and Appendix 1 (section 10) of QA245. Before opting for a PhD by article in Law, a number of discipline-specific considerations should be taken into account. These include the publication timelines of peer-reviewed journals in law, norms of single authorship, and the nature of the proposed methodology. In particular, where the research involves socio-legal, qualitative, or quantitative methods requiring ethical approval, the time required for ethics review, data collection, and analysis should be factored into the decision as to whether an article-based format is feasible within the expected registration period.

The detailed guidelines set out above for the School of Business & Economics apply to the consideration and examination of article-based PhD theses within the School of Law. In addition, the following discipline-specific considerations are relevant when determining the appropriateness and structure of a PhD by article in Law.

#### Subject matter of published articles

The articles presented should form a coherent programme of legal research addressing a clearly defined set of linked research questions. Coherence may be demonstrated through a shared doctrinal, theoretical, critical, or socio-legal framework, rather than through a single dataset or methodology. The introductory and concluding chapters must clearly articulate the unifying contribution to legal scholarship.

#### Authorship and contribution

Single authorship is the norm in legal scholarship and is expected in most cases. Where co-authored articles are included, the student must make explicit their intellectual and substantive contribution to each article. Clear statements of authorship and contribution must be included in the thesis, in line with QA245.

#### Structure of the article-based PhD

In addition to the core articles, the thesis must include an introductory chapter situating the research within the relevant literature and methodology, and a concluding chapter drawing together the articles to demonstrate their coherence and overall contribution to knowledge. A full bibliography is required.

#### Decision on thesis format

The decision to submit an article-based thesis should normally be discussed at an early stage, but may evolve over the course of the PhD with the agreement of the supervisor(s) and GRC. Students may revert to a monograph-style thesis where appropriate.

## Appendix 1: Sample Supervision Record Form

# Sample Supervision Record Form

College of Business, Public Policy, and Law  
University of Galway

It is highly recommended that you keep records of your formal meetings with your research supervisor(s). This way, you will be able to trace the history of how your project developed over time. These records may also help to prevent misunderstandings and will assist with reminding both supervisor and supervisee of deadlines agreed, action points to be taken, or issues to follow up.

It is up to you and your supervisor to determine what sort of record keeping system will work best for you. Some supervisors request that students email them a meeting summary following each formal supervision. Others recommend keeping a dedicated logbook or shared document. Below is a template that you might use or adapt to your own purposes.

---

Date, time, and location of supervision

People present

Review of objectives achieved since last meeting

Summary of meeting discussion points

Action points or issues for each person to follow up (including any deadlines)

Date, time, and location of next supervision

## **Appendix 2: Sample PhD Milestones for Local Adaptation**

Schools, programmes, and/or disciplinary areas should develop local guidelines outlining the milestones that students are normally expected to achieve in each year of their PhD journey (with the understanding that the timing and, indeed, the relevance of these milestones will vary according to the particulars of each student's research project). Information on anticipated milestones should be included in local handbooks.

The following list suggests some sample PhD milestones that may be adapted in accordance with disciplinary norms and individual circumstances.

### ***Year 1***

- Establish supervisor and supervisee expectations.
- Begin completing the structured modules/training required for the Structured PhD.
- Complete any discipline-specific requirements of the Structured PhD Programme.
- Complete Research Integrity training.
- Deepen understanding of the 'problem' or key issues in the research.
- Narrow and refine the research topic and question(s).
- Create an overarching project plan, including setting objectives for each stage.
- Assess the feasibility of the research design within the registration timeframe, including funding, data access, and ethical approval requirements (where applicable).
- Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake the research project.
- Develop a Personal Development Plan.
- Situate the project within wider scholarly conversations, typically via a literature review.
- Identify and learn to use relevant methodologies, resources, techniques, and equipment.
- Establish regular writing and feedback practices (e.g. draft chapters or articles).
- Prepare with supervisor for engagement with the GRC, including understanding the role of the GRC and expectations for the first annual meeting.

### ***Year 2***

- Complete any discipline-specific requirements of the Structured PhD Programme.
- Develop an outline of how the data for the project will be collected and the timelines envisaged.
- Gain ethics approval (where required).
- Demonstrate effective project management through the setting of interim research goals and prioritisation of activities.
- Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project.
- Update the Personal Development Plan.
- Continue completing the structured modules/training required for the Structured PhD.
- Complete the initial stages of fieldwork/data collection.
- Show clear evidence of progress towards submission.

- Complete preparatory work for the Mini-Viva, including submission of written material and development of an oral presentation.
- Complete the Mini-Viva process.

### *Year 3*

- Complete any discipline-specific requirements of the Structured PhD Programme.
- Demonstrate effective project management through the setting of interim research goals and prioritisation of activities.
- Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project.
- Update the Personal Development Plan.
- Finish the structured modules/training required for the Structured PhD (if not previously completed in an earlier year).
- Complete fieldwork/data collection.
- Reflect upon and evaluate collected data.
- Show clear evidence of progress towards submission.
- Disseminate research findings.

### *Year 4*

- Complete any discipline-specific requirements of the Structured PhD Programme.
- Demonstrate effective project management through the setting of interim research goals and prioritisation of activities.
- Update the Personal Development Plan.
- Complete drafting and polishing of all thesis chapters.
- Disseminate research findings.
- External examiner selected.
- Internal examiner selected.
- Submission date agreed.
- Prepare for the viva examination, including mock viva or equivalent preparatory support where available.
- Viva examination scheduled.

## Appendix 3: PhD Modules and Module Descriptors

### Modules

#### *PhD Modules available in the School of Business and Economics*

<u>Module</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>ECTS</u>
EC374	Advanced Econometrics	10
EC556	Philosophy of Social Science	10
EC660	Research Seminar I (Advanced Microeconomics)	10
EC661	Research Seminar II (Advanced Macroeconomics)	10
MG6103	Employment Relations and Law	10
MGXXX	Management Theories Doctoral Workshop Series	TBC
MK5158	Partnership Marketing	5

Please note that not all modules will run every year, so check with the relevant discipline before registering.

#### *PhD modules available in the School of Law*

<u>Module</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>ECTS</u>
LW6101	Legal Opinion or Advice	5
LW6102	Law Research Skills 1 - Preparation, Presentation & Discussion	5
LW6103	Law Research Skills 2 - Engaging in Scholarship and Debate	5

### Module Descriptors

#### *PhD Modules available in the School of Business and Economics*

##### EC374 Advanced Econometrics

Economists place a strong emphasis on understanding the causal mechanisms that drive statistical relationships. This is because without a clear view on causation, inferring meaningful and useful results from empirical analysis can be challenging. In this context, this module considers a range of econometric and statistical tools commonly used to estimate causal effects in economics. In particular, it addresses issues relating to research design, identification, and the ‘credibility’ of results and findings. The module begins by considering two frameworks for,

or approaches to, thinking about causal inference, namely directed acyclic graphs and the potential outcomes framework. Following this, a range of specific methods or ‘tools’ are examined, including matching, instrumental variables, panel data methods, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity design, and synthetic control. Since a crucial part of academic and professional research is the ability to present research design and results clearly, convincingly, and succinctly, the module also aims to help students develop their analysis and presentation skills and the module assessment is designed with this in mind.

#### EC556 Philosophy of Social Science

Philosophy and Social Science: A Conceptual Framework; Major System of Thought in Philosophy: From Rationalism to Post-Positivism; The Social Sciences: Emergence and Philosophical Foundations; Major Developments in Contemporary Philosophy of Science and Social Sciences; Neo-Positivism: Dominance and Decline; Hermeneutics: The Philosophy of Interpretation and Understanding; Critical Theory; Post-Positivist Philosophies; Critical Realism; Causal Holism; and Social Constructivism. On successful completion of this module, students should be able to critically evaluate major systems of thought including rationalism and post positivism, the philosophy of interpretation and understanding, Critical Realism; Causal Holism; and Social Constructivism.

#### EC660 Advanced Microeconomic Theory

Advanced Microeconomics is intended to introduce students to core topics and the frontiers of research in microeconomic theory. Topics may vary from year to year, but it is expected that they will include: consumer theory, game theory, producer theory, and industrial organization. The course focuses on developing the ability to critically engage with existing economic models and develop new ones. This module is about gaining a deeper, more flexible understanding of economic theory. The objective of the course is to write a research paper in microeconomic theory.

#### EC661 Advanced Macroeconomics

This theory module begins with a treatment of modern growth theory and empirics. Topics include the neoclassical growth model, cross-country convergence, and theories of endogenous growth. We then consider theories of business cycle fluctuations, including both real business cycle and new Keynesian approaches. We then develop dynamic treatments of monetary, fiscal and exchange rate policies, with applications to the Irish and euro zone economies. The module concludes with an exploration of political economy models of macroeconomic policy. On successful completion of this module, students should:

- Be able to explain and critically evaluate theories of endogenous growth, neoclassical growth model.
- Use computer based macroeconomic modelling software to analyse and interpret data.

#### MG6103: Employment Relations and Law

The cornerstone of all human resource management activity is the employment relationship as a legal, social, economic and psychological exchange. This module will provide students with

a comprehensive understanding of employment relations perspectives and debates. It will also present a critical perspective on the legal aspects of employment relations policy and practice. The course will enable learners to understand, analyze and evaluate competing perspectives associated with managing employment relations strategies and their outcomes for employees and management. Learners will also be able to assess the impact of employment law on employment relations and organizational practice and gain insights into the creation and implementation of effective employment relations procedures and policies. At the outset, you will learn the basic principles of Irish employment law and how it is interpreted in practice. The module requires students to reflect critically on theory and practice from an ethical and professional standpoint and provides opportunities for applied learning and continuous professional development.

#### MGXXX: Management Theories Doctoral Workshop Series

The aim of this module is to offer Discipline-specific doctoral training by providing a series of workshops introducing the theoretical foundation in the field of Management, as well as an overview of some topics in Management-related research. The workshops provide an overview of the most relevant theoretical traditions and more recent theoretical developments used in the research field of Management. The course is based on a high level of student involvement. Given a high content-to-time ratio, students are expected to be thoroughly prepared and actively participate in the discussion.

#### MK5158 Partnership Marketing

As businesses respond to societies grandest challenges such as climate change, more so then ever leaders require the skills to adapt to an ever-evolving landscape. Stakeholder engagement, network development and partnership relationships are playing an important strategic role in planning and marketing leadership. The aim of this module is twofold a) to explore the role of stakeholder engagement and partnership development as an approach to create competitive advantage. b) to demonstrate the evidence-based stakeholder and partnership processes available to support problem solving in an ever-evolving business environment.

#### ***PhD modules available in the School of Law***

##### LW6101: Legal Opinion or Advice

In this module you will be centrally involved in submitting an opinion or advice to a national, regional or international body. The body may be governmental (e.g. the Law Reform Commission), non-governmental (e.g. Amnesty International) or intergovernmental (e.g. Council of Europe, EU or UN). The opinion/advice may include an amicus curiae intervention before a domestic, regional or international court or adjudicative body.

##### LW6102: Law Research Skills 1 - Preparation, Presentation and Discussion

In this module, which you will take in the second year of your structured PhD, you will present your research to date in a seminar to a panel of experts and an audience of your peers, and respond to feedback. The Law Research Skills being assessed in this module include the ability to develop, refine, present and debate your research findings to date at a high level amongst a

community of peers and scholars of international standing. Taking feedback, evaluating presentations and refining skills are essential components of this module.

### LW6103: Law Research Skills 2 - Engaging in Scholarship and Debate

In this module, which you will take in the third year of your structured PhD, having already taken Law Research Skills 1, you will present your advanced research in a seminar to a panel of experts and an audience of your peers, and respond to feedback. You will develop, refine, articulate and debate (to the highest levels) your original research contribution. Engaging with peers and scholars to refine your propositions, identify weaknesses for remediation and develop strategies for future work are the core aspects addressed here, building on earlier skills development.

## Appendix 4: Mini-Viva Report – Sample Guidelines

The following contains a brief description of some of the components that could constitute a Mini-Viva Report. Please note that the following should be regarded as guidelines only and that a Mini-Viva Report will typically comprise approximately 5,000 words.

**Title:** Should be exact, concise and clear to attract the intended readers. It should identify the general area of research and contain no secondary details.

**Introduction:** This introduces the research by briefly:

- (i) Giving the context of the research problem (background)
- (ii) Establishing the relevance of the research (rationale) by:
  - reviewing relevant previous research (literature review)
  - emphasising the importance of the research area
  - specifying the potential benefits of the research
- (iii) Defining the research problem (problem statement) by one or more of the following:
  - highlighting a gap in the research area
  - posing a new research problem whose solution is unknown
  - continuing, by generalising, relaxing assumptions, or furthering, previously developed research
  - proposing alternative, perhaps simpler, solutions to current research problems
- (iv) Proposing a solution by:
  - outlining the steps taken to develop the solution (objectives)
  - setting out clearly the assumptions used to obtain the solution
  - outlining the aspects of the research area that will not be covered (scope)
  - presenting the research methodology
  - outlining the structure of the report

A person reading the introduction should be able to situate the research problem, be convinced of its importance, be aware of the problem statement - including any assumptions - and the techniques used in the solution, and should understand the contribution of the report.

**Literature Review:** This is an evaluation of relevant and significant existing research. It shows the relationships between different work and how it relates to the research problem at hand. It should include key publications and survey papers and:

- demonstrate the importance of the author's research area and broader trends in the field
- place the author's research in the context of other ongoing research and broader field
- emphasise the author's contribution by highlighting the shortcomings, unrealistic assumptions or other limitations of existing research
- be organised by ideas and not by authors or publication dates

Sources may include journal articles, books, conference proceedings, corporate reports, internal reports, correspondence, theses, Internet, CD-ROM, newspapers and magazines. Library staff can help you find the relevant material. They are experts in how to do a literature search.

**Current Research:** This forms the bulk of the report and carries out in detail points (iii) and (iv) mentioned in the introduction. It could include initial research directions and findings, simulation and experimental results and evaluation of existing techniques. The main purpose is to convince the examiner that the student is capable of doing original and significant research work at PhD level.

**Research Plan:** GRC members understand that the bulk of the student's research contribution occurs in the latter stages of a PhD programme. This section of the report should include a clear statement of the tasks that remain and give target dates by which specific milestones will be achieved.

**Conclusions:** This section should include:

- Short and concise statements about the main findings of the research (conclusions)
- A summary of the specific contributions of the report, including any shortcomings, work which remains to be completed, or issues which remain unresolved (contribution)

**References:** These are closely tied to the literature review and must all be referred to in the report. They are normally organised alphabetically by author surname, or, less frequently, by order of citation in the report. Library staff can show you how to cite your references.

**Appendices:** These include any necessary material that may impede the smooth presentation of the report. Examples include large tables or figures, etc.