

## **CUBS Postgraduate Research Handbook**

Cork University Business School (CUBS) is committed to research excellence and quality and to supporting the next generation of research leaders. We aim to ensure our postgraduate research graduates are prepared, through our training and support, for a wide range of high-level successful careers. Key to this strategy is the growth in the critical mass of research quality and diversity.

It is important that all supervisors and postgraduate research students familiarise themselves with UCC Graduate Studies policies [here](#). This handbook has been developed by the CUBS Postgraduate Research (PGR) Committee to provide guidance on UCC Graduate Studies policies as they apply to postgraduate research programmes within CUBS. Please be advised, if inconsistencies arise, UCC Graduate Studies policies take precedence over the guidance offered in the CUBS PGR Handbook.

- 1. PGR Degree Fee Structure;**
- 2. PGR Degree Application Process;**
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- 6. PGR Training;**
- 7. PGR Student Learning Plan;**
- 8. PGR Ethical Considerations;**
- 9. PGR Progress Reviews;**
- 10. Research Thesis Format.**

All registered CUBS PGR students will have access to UCC's Graduate Education Manager (GEM), the university's administrative platform for research students. GEM manages key processes such as academic progression, registration change requests, examinations, and more. All students are expected to familiarise themselves with GEM.

## **1. PGR Degree Fee Structure**

The PGR Fees are outlined in the College of Business & Law Postgraduate Fees Schedule (see [here](#)). Any requests for fee waivers and/or derogations have to be made to Head of Department, the School and the College of Business and Law. The School expects that fee waivers will only be granted in exceptional circumstances such as international students who win scholarships which only pay EU fees and students that come under the University's Sanctuary Scholarship (i.e. asylum seekers and refugees).

## **2. PGR Degree Application Process**

All applicants to CUBS PGR programmes are required to submit a research proposal through the online application system, UCC Apply. Applicants should use the proposal template in Appendix A. Supervisors are required to ask all applicants to complete the proposal template which they should review and provide feedback on before it is submitted through the online application system. Only the DBA in Business Economics and the PhD in Business Information Systems are exempt from this rule. All PGR applications will be reviewed by the relevant Head of Department, Department PGR Coordinator, and/or CUBS Director of PGR Research.

## **3. PGR Supervision Teams**

CUBS follows the [UCC Policy on the Supervision of Research Students](#). All PGR students will have a "Supervisory Team" consisting of a minimum of two members, one of whom will be the designated "Lead Supervisor". In addition to the "Lead Supervisor", the Supervisory Team will include "Co-supervisor(s)" and/or "Advisor(s)". It is recommended that the Supervisory Team does not include more than three staff members (including the Supervisors and Advisor). All members of the Supervisory Team should be named at approval stage, including the Lead Supervisor.<sup>1</sup> Supervisory Teams may include UCC staff members from different academic units. Where the Supervisory Team is derived from different academic units in UCC, FTE splits must be agreed and clearly stated at the admission stage.

The Lead Supervisor is a member of UCC academic or research staff who is responsible for the overall direction of the Student's research. This includes managing administrative issues relating to the Student's registration and progression and supporting the Student in preparation for examination of their thesis. The Lead Supervisor's UCC contract must extend beyond the minimum duration of the Student's approved programme. The Unit of the Lead Supervisor will be deemed, for administrative purposes, to be the Unit of the Student.

Co-supervisors are members of academic or research staff of UCC or may be external to UCC (e.g., in another university, industry or a research organization). A Co-supervisor provides significant specialist advice as necessary for the progress of the research. A Co-supervisor (whether internal or external) must be an active participant in the supervision

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<sup>1</sup> The exception to this is the DBA in Business Economics and the PhD in Business Information Systems where the Supervisory team is confirmed in month 12 of the student's studies.

of the project. External supervisors must confirm agreement with the supervision principles of UCC.

The Advisor is a member of UCC academic or research staff who provides a point of contact on pastoral, procedural and student support issues. An Advisor shall be an experienced member of staff who is aware of the student support services that the University offers and is aware of the current regulations and processes relating to the programme. The Advisor does not offer specialist academic support but is expected to meet the student twice per year at a minimum.

At least one member of the Supervisory Team (not the Advisor or External Supervisor) must hold a doctoral degree if the Student being supervised is registered on a doctoral programme. At least one member of the supervisory team (not the Advisor or External Supervisor) must have successfully supervised a Student to completion in the relevant programme, i.e. a doctoral student cannot be supervised by a team where no member of the team has yet to supervise successfully a doctoral student to graduation. A Research Masters student cannot be supervised by a team where no member of the team has yet to supervise successfully at least one Research Masters or Doctoral Student to completion.

Approval of the Supervisory Team lies with the relevant Head of Unit and/or the CUBS Director of PGR Research. At the point of consideration of student applications, the current workload of the proposed supervisors should be considered to ensure that approval of additional students is not unfair to the staff member or student involved. The number of students that an individual can supervise satisfactorily will vary with the nature and size of the research group, and with the scope of their other duties. It is recommended that a supervisor supervises no more than six and, reflecting UCC policy, a maximum of eight full-time equivalent research students at any one time. Any exceptions must be discussed with the Head of Unit to ensure that the workload is sustainable so that the research student is appropriately supported. Where an external (non-UCC) supervisor is involved, the Head of Unit of the Lead Supervisor must satisfy themselves of the credentials of the External Supervisor. Supervision of non-UCC students may be recognised if there is an agreement in place between UCC and the relevant Higher Education Institution on request to the Dean and Head of Department.

There should be no conflict of interest between any member of the Supervisory Team and the Student. Where a conflict of interest does arise (for example, a personal or family relationship), this must be reported to the Head of Unit who may appoint an additional Co-supervisor and who will report the matter to the relevant Vice Dean or Chair of the College Graduate Studies Committee for approval and possible further determination.

Post-doctoral researchers on temporary contracts may play a role in the supervision of research students, and may be members of a Supervisory Team, working closely with the research student. However, where this occurs, the exact responsibilities of the researcher must be defined and agreed by the student and Supervisory Team. A researcher cannot be a formal member of a Supervisory Team unless their contract

extends beyond the period of registration of the student in question. Co-supervisors may not act as Internal Examiners for a student's thesis.

#### **4. Supervision meetings**

Supervisors play a key role throughout the student's study, i.e., the student will meet formally and regularly with their Supervisory Team to set objectives and timelines, and review progress.

Records of supervision must be kept for all supervision meetings (even if the supervisory work is carried out by MS Teams, Skype, email, phone). It is recommended that a record of each meeting is completed by email by the student and checked by the Supervisory Team for approval after each meeting. A minimum of 10 supervision meetings should take place per 12 months for full-time students, and 5 for part-time students. The Lead Supervisor will be asked to confirm the number of recorded supervision meetings that have taken place during the previous 12 months in the PGR annual review report.

It is important that the role of each member of the supervisory team is discussed with the PGR student. For instance, if one supervisor on the team is providing supervision for one aspect of the project (e.g. qualitative analysis, policy formation, lead supervisor on one paper) that should be clearly communicated to the PGR student. If there are changes made to the supervision team, this should be clearly communicated to the PGR student.

#### **5. Responsibilities of the PGR Student, Supervision Team and Head of Unit**

It is the responsibility of the **Student** to:

- Work as a professional, independent researcher, accountable for the development and responsible conduct of their own research.
- Maintain a professional, respectful and constructive relationship with the Supervisory Team and the university community.
- Maintain regular communications with the Supervisory Team and respond to requests/inquiries promptly.
- Engage with Research Progress Reviews and co-development of the Research Learning Plan.
- Ensure good record keeping in relation to the research, including recording of supervision meetings, actions, outcomes and timeframes which are agreed by the Student and the Supervisory Team.
- Familiarise themselves with and fulfil all academic or training requirements relevant to the programme.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of University regulations and administrative requirements relevant to the research degree, including those relating to research integrity, dispute resolution, thesis submission and examination and plagiarism.

It is the responsibility of the **Supervisory Team** to:

- Provide intellectual and pedagogical support of the Student's research.

- Maintain a respectful, professional and constructive relationship with the Student, encouraging the Student to become an active member of the research community, for example by advising on attendance at orientation events, conferences, workshops and on publication of research output and responding to funding calls.
- Maintain regular communications with the Student and respond to requests/inquiries promptly.
- Engage with Research Progress Reviews and co-development of the Research Learning Plan.
- Ensure good record keeping in relation to the research, including recording of supervision meetings, actions, outcomes and timeframes which are agreed by the Student and the Supervisory Team.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of University regulations and administrative requirements relevant to the research programme, including those relating to research integrity, dispute resolution, thesis submission and examination and plagiarism.
- Advise the Student on conduct of responsible research, including principles of good practice, ethical approval, competence, responsibility, integrity, rights and dignity of research participants, data management and dissemination.

In addition to the responsibilities detailed above, the **Lead Supervisor** also has responsibility for ensuring that all required administrative tasks have been undertaken and appropriately recorded. These include:

- Ensuring that a Research Learning Plan is discussed, agreed and signed by the Supervisory Team and the Student within the first three months of the programme.
- Ensuring that Research Progress Reviews take place and are appropriately recorded.
- Liaising with the Supervisory Team to assist the Head of Unit to identify suitable examiners.

It is the responsibility of the **Head of Unit** to:

- Ensure that the Student has been provided with access to adequate resources, facilities and equipment for their research programme.
- Ensure that the Student is assigned to the appropriate Graduate Studies Committee<sup>2</sup>, which is responsible inter alia for:
  - Monitoring and supporting the progress of the Student.
  - Providing a mechanism for local identification and resolution of any problems that may emerge.
  - Maintaining accurate records of all relevant procedures, activities and meetings, including Student's Research Progress Reviews.
- Assess the appropriateness of and approve the Supervisory Team to ensure that the Student is suitably supported.
- Support supervisors in engaging with appropriate supervisor training.
- Assess supervisor(s)'s workload considerations.
- In consultation with the Supervisory Team, identify and propose examiners.

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<sup>2</sup> All Units within CUBS have a Graduate Studies Committee.

## 6. PGR Training

All PhD students are required to complete PGR training that will enable them to conduct independent research. All PhD students must complete 15 credits of postgraduate research modules as a minimum.<sup>3</sup>

The following 5-credit modules are recommended for all CUBS PhD students:

- BU7004 Business Research Skills
- BU7005 Qualitative Research Methods
- BU7006 Quantitative Research Methods
- BU7007 Action Design Research

Further information on these modules is available through UCC's Book of Modules and from the course coordinators. PGR students can register for discipline specific modules with the relevant [form](#).

Where students and their Supervisory Team feel that these modules are not appropriate for their training (e.g. due to prior advanced knowledge in some of these areas or specific training needs in relation to their research), other modules should be chosen from the UCC postgraduate suite of modules. In case required training is not available through CUBS or UCC postgraduate modules, PhD students may get recognition for up to 10 credits over the course of their programme for external modules or courses. UCC's policy on '[Recognition of Courses/Modules taken externally for Research Students](#)' must be fully complied with and the necessary documentation submitted to the College of Business and Law's Head of Graduate School.

Additional career development training that is accessible to PGR students is provided by UCC and CUBS through relevant modules and PGR seminars. While MSc Research Students are not required to complete PGR modules, it is recommended that they discuss training needs with their supervisory team.

## 7. PGR Student Learning Plan

The Research Learning Plan must be drafted and agreed between the Student and the Supervisory Team within the first three months of the programme and is updated following each Research Progress Review. This Research Learning Plan must include, at a minimum, details on the frequency of meetings (minimum of 10 recorded meetings per annum for full time students and 5 for part-time), expectations, objectives and related timelines, dates of annual progress reviews, module requirements.

The Research Learning Plan is completed on GEM.

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<sup>3</sup> Students who are registered on postgraduate research programmes that incorporate taught modules (e.g. DBA Business Economics; PhD Business Information Systems) should complete the training specified in these programmes.

## 8. PGR Ethical Considerations

It is important that every PGR student and supervisory team consider if ethical approval is required for the research project. Ethical approval cannot be applied for retrospectively. In most instances, where the research project methodology is not clinical or therapeutic in nature, ethical applications are processed through the [Social Research Ethical Committee \(SREC\)](#).

UCC academic staff and postgraduate research students can apply to SREC when undertaking social research where the methodology is not clinical or therapeutic in nature and proposes to involve:

- direct interaction with human participants for the purpose of data collection using research methods such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus groups etc;
- indirect observation with human participants for example using observation, web surveys etc;
- access to, or utilisation of, anonymised datasets;
- access to, or utilisation of, data or case files/records concerning identifiable individuals;
- conducting Internet Research or research online.

The BU7004 module covers ethical issues in business research, and there is a session on applying for ethical approval through SREC.

## 9. PGR progress reviews

All PGR students at UCC must engage with a formal research progress review, on an annual basis at a minimum. This formal research progress review is in addition to any regular meetings the student has with their supervisory team.

Please see [UCC Policy on Progress Reviews for Research Students | University College Cork](#).

It is the responsibility of the PGR student to initiate the annual progress review process on Graduate Education Manager (GEM) <https://www.ucc.ie/en/med-health/gradstudies/graduate-education-manager/>

Please see Appendix B for the GEM template. The template is provided for reference only, as all required fields must be completed directly in GEM.

In addition, all CUBS PGR students are required to upload a separate document on GEM with the following information:

### Year 1 Progress Documentation

The Year 1 report should be a maximum of 5000 words and contain:

- A description of the general area of research, explaining why the work is being undertaken and its potential significance.
- A succinct literature review.
- The research questions.

- An outline of the research methods and sources of evidence or data that are anticipated to be used; the means by which the student will analyse and/or acquire this evidence or data; and the analysis to which it will be subjected.
- A brief description of expected findings and their impact on scholarship including, if appropriate, who is likely to benefit from the work and how.
- A proposed programme for the completion of the dissertation in Gantt chart format.
- Conferences attended in the previous 12 months and an indication of specific journals the student intends to target for publication.

### Year 2 Progress Documentation

The Year 2 report should be a maximum of 3000 words and contain:

- A concise summary of the research to date, explaining the main issues and argument of the research, its contribution to the field of study, and noting questions and problems.
- A methodological overview.
- A proposed timetable for the next two years of research in Gantt chart format.
- A list of publications accepted, under review, in process or planned.
- Conferences attended in the previous 12 months.
- An overview of what has been achieved since the last review.
- A confirmation of the thesis format.

### Year 3+ Progress Documentation

The Year 3 report should be a maximum of 3000 words and contain:

- A one-page summary of the dissertation.
- A table of contents with a percentage of the amount of work completed for each chapter.
- A summary of key findings.
- A list of publications accepted, under review, in process or planned.
- Conferences attended in the previous 12 months.
- An overview of what has been achieved since the last review.
- The target date for submission of the dissertation.

## **10. Research thesis format**

Doctoral students have the option of submitting their research written-up as either a PhD thesis or as a Publication-based PhD thesis. Masters by Research students also have the option to submit a publication-based thesis.

Even though all doctoral students and supervisors are strongly encouraged to consider the Publication-based PhD thesis route, the decision to follow this route will depend on an overall assessment of the doctoral candidate's training needs, progress with data collection, and progress with writing-up. It should be kept in mind that publications in research journals take a considerable amount of time and this would need to be factored in a submission by publication plan. A final decision on the route to be followed should be made within the first two years of full-time study. However, all PGR students are

strongly encouraged to pursue the publication of their research within three years of their thesis being examined. In the case of PhD thesis, the length of the thesis would typically be a minimum of 70,000 words and a maximum of 100,000 words inclusive of an abstract of maximum 600 words, footnotes, tables, appendices and bibliography, unless there are exceptional circumstances and provided this has the support of the School Postgraduate Research Committee.

In the case of Masters by Research thesis, the length of the thesis would typically be a minimum of 25,000 words and a maximum of 40,000 words inclusive of an abstract of maximum 600 words, footnotes, tables, appendices and bibliography, unless there are exceptional circumstances and provided this has the support of the School Postgraduate Research Committee.

In both cases, the text must be formatted with a left-hand margin 4 cm. Font size 12 and one-and-a-half spacing. Consistent referencing style should be used in the thesis and Harvard referencing style is recommended for use in the bibliography.

A Publication-based PhD thesis should include at least one paper published in a peer-reviewed academic journal, and at least two other papers in press, submitted or planned for publication. High quality journals listed in the ABS list of academic journals should be prioritised for publication. However, disciplinary-focused journals of high quality may also be chosen, especially where the doctoral research is of interdisciplinary nature.<sup>4</sup>

A Publication-based Masters by Research thesis should include one paper published, in press, submitted or planned for publication. High quality journals listed in the CUBS list of academic journals should be prioritised for publication. However, disciplinary-focused journals of high quality may also be chosen, especially where the doctoral research is of interdisciplinary nature. All papers in a publication-based thesis should fit around the pre-approved coherent topic. Normally, the files used in the thesis should be the final manuscript files submitted prior to publication. However, there does not have to be an exact correspondence between the published articles and thesis versions as, for example, additional material may be included in versions of publications included in a thesis, or sections contributed by others which are not necessary for the thesis version may be removed.

Publication-based theses must include, as well as the works themselves, a substantial and original introduction and discussion to tie together the work and present a coherent thesis. The introduction will typically take the form of a review of the relevant literature and an explanation of the scope and objectives of the work described in the thesis. The discussion or conclusion should form a critical synthesis or analysis of the overall contribution of the work to the field concerned.

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<sup>4</sup> Q1 and Q2 ranked journals on SCIMAGO are considered high quality journals. In certain disciplines it is recognised that other formats (i.e. peer reviewed conference proceedings or chapters in books) may be a recognised final scholarly output.

The candidate should be first author of the papers presented in a Publication-based thesis. In all cases where papers presented in a Publication-based thesis have multiple authors, the individual contributions of the candidate and the co-authors to the paper should be clearly specified for each article. In addition, candidates must inform co-authors of the inclusion of such work in their thesis and quantify the extent of such additional input.

All PGR students and supervisors are required to additionally familiarise themselves with the UCC procedures for the submission and examination of theses for postgraduate programmes.

**APPENDIX A: Postgraduate research proposal template**

Proposed Project Title:

Please indicate if you have discussed your project with a member of faculty within Cork University Business School.

Please confirm that this person has agreed to supervise your research?

Yes

No

Please provide details of your proposed research to include (a) aims, objectives and central research questions (and, if appropriate, research hypotheses) of the project; (b) how existing literature on the topic has been used to inform the proposal and the theoretical frameworks you propose to use; and (c) how the project will advance/make a contribution to existing knowledge (*Max 800 words*):

Please detail the research design and methodologies to be employed in carrying out your research project. This should be described in sufficient detail to demonstrate your understanding of the research topic. Please include: (a) details on the proposed sample and how access will be sought, (b) details on the proposed methodology (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods) and its suitability for the proposed research, and (c) proposed analysis to be conducted (*Max 400 words*):

Please outline your reasons for wishing to pursue a PhD in Cork University Business School and why you have proposed this research project (Max 300 words)

## **APPENDIX B: Annual Progress Review Template**

### **1. Student & Programme Information**

Student Name:

Student ID:

Programme: (e.g. PhD / MRes / MD)

Department/School:

Supervisory Team:

Start Date:

Mode of Study: (Full-time / Part-time)

### **2. Thesis Title & Project Summary**

Working Thesis Title:

Overall Aim of Research Project: (Brief paragraph describing research focus and intended contribution)

### **3. Research Objectives**

Objectives for the Year Ahead: (Outline key milestones and activities planned from now to the next review)

### **4. Challenges & Mitigation**

Do you foresee any issues in the coming year?

Potential Challenges and Mitigation Strategies:

### **5. Research Integrity**

Have you completed Research Integrity training?

If yes, list training completed (e.g. Epigeum, SREC)

If no, outline your plan to complete required training.

### **6. Ethical Approval**

Does your research require ethical approval?

Details of Submission (if applicable):

### **7. Data Management**

Do you have a Data Management Plan?

Details of Data Management Plan:

### **8. Infrastructure & Materials**

Internal Resources Required:

External Resources Required:

**9. Agreements with Supervisory Team**

Written Material Submission Frequency:

Feedback Frequency and Format:

Agreed Working Hours:

Other Notes on Supervision:

**10. Teaching, Demonstrating, Outreach & Volunteering**

Involvement to Date:

Planned Involvement (if any):

Expectations for Paid/Unpaid Teaching:

**11. Annual Leave**

Annual Leave Taken to Date:

Planned Leave:

**12. Modules Completed / Planned**

Modules Completed:

Modules Planned (with Supervisory Team agreement):

**13. Learning & Development**

Summary of Activities Completed:

Planned Training & Development:

Career Preparation Activities (Academic and Non-Academic):

**14. Review of Research Progress**

Progress Since Last Review:

Issues That May Have Affected Progress:

Language Support Required? (Yes/No)

**15. Goals**

Goal Title | Type | Deadline | Requirements for Completion | Confirmation Method

**16. Supervisory Team Meetings**

Number of Meetings Held:

Meeting Minutes Location:

Recorded in PGR System (e.g. GEM)?

Comments on Supervision:

**17. Supplementary Information**

Any Additional Comments or Requirements:

Thesis Access Confirmation: (CORA, embargo details, etc.)

**18. Supervisor Review**

Comments on Student's Progress: (To be completed by Lead Supervisor on behalf of the Supervisory Team)

New/Modified Goals for Next Review Period: