



Quality and Standards Manual

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy

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SECTION 12: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

The University is committed to ensuring that its postgraduate research programmes remain rigorous and relevant in acknowledgement of their unique status as the highest academic qualifications that it is able to bestow. The quality assurance framework underpinning these programmes is necessarily rigorous, yet proportionate. This section sets out the University's approach to assuring itself of the quality of the programmes it offers.

1. Evaluation and review

- 1.1. The University requires that each of the programmes it offers is subject to regular evaluation and review. Formally, this is done on an annual basis via reports to Boards of Studies.
- 1.2. In the case of the taught phase of professional doctoral, Handbook D.ii.b sets out the procedure and timescale to be followed.
- 1.3. In the case of the Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Philosophy programmes and the research phase of professional doctoral programmes and the Master by Research, it is acknowledged that the programme of study is significantly tailored towards the needs of each individual student. Nevertheless, it is important that each Faculty is able to assure itself as to the state of the research environment to which it admits postgraduate research students.
- 1.4. The procedure for conducting annual monitoring of postgraduate research degree programmes is set out in Handbook D.ii.c. Briefly, it requires academic departments and faculties to reflect on the following:
 - 1.4.1. Recruitment
 - 1.4.2. Progress and submissions
 - 1.4.3. Resources and environment
- 1.5. Reports will be required at departmental level and then synthesised into a Faculty overview report to be scrutinised by each Board of Studies. Once approved by the Board of Studies, reports will be submitted to the Postgraduate Research Programmes Subcommittee.

2. Partnerships

- 2.1. The University values the richness of the experience that its partners can offer to students who wish to pursue a postgraduate research degree. There are presently two models of engagement with partner institutions in the delivery of postgraduate research programmes:
 - 2.1.1. Academic partnership: where the University assures itself of the suitability of the research environment at the premises of its partner and permits staff employed by its partner to undertake the full range of supervision and management responsibilities outlined in this handbook.

- 2.1.2. Agency partnership: where by the University assures the research environment at the premises of its partner, but where the University retains operational responsibility for the supervision of students at the partner institution. This does not preclude employees of the partner institution from being nominated to a supervisory team; however in this arrangement, the Principal Supervisor must always be an employee of the University.

Partnership approval process

- 2.2. The University's full process for partner approvals is set out in Handbook C.ii.
- 2.3. Where an existing partner wishes to offer postgraduate research degree programmes it must, in the first instance, provide the relevant Faculty Management Group with a report outlining its research environment. This is likely to include details of:
 - 2.3.1. Research seminars offered
 - 2.3.2. Support for staff/students to attend relevant conferences
 - 2.3.3. Discipline specific resources for the conduct of research
 - 2.3.4. Availability of training opportunities
 - 2.3.5. Opportunities for research support for students
 - 2.3.6. Existing research collaborations with other organisations
 - 2.3.7. (if proposing an academic partnership) qualifications of staff in relation to the criteria for Principal and Secondary supervisors outlined in section 4 of this Handbook.
 - 2.3.8. (if proposing an academic partnership) how the partner institution will manage postgraduate research in adherence with the provisions of this handbook
- 2.4. If, following consideration of this report, the Faculty Management Group wishes to proceed with the proposal, advice should be taken from the External & Professional Programmes Manager to determine what further steps are required.