



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

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# **POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT HANDBOOK 2020-21**

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European universities have been awarding degrees since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when 'Doctor' was the title given to people whose knowledge, increased by study and tested by practice, gave them the authority to teach others.

While there is no reason to stick to traditions just because they are time-honoured, ask yourself if there can be anything more fundamental than knowledge – the freedom to pursue it, the wisdom to use it – to individual and collective well-being.

Ask yourself if you are the kind of person who has an important question in mind, which no one has yet addressed or answered satisfactorily; who has the ability to explain what inspired it and why it matters; who will not be deterred from advancing that knowledge through genuine professional work.

*That* is original research.

That is what a PhD is about: making a difference.

*Alone of all mankind, the scholar is no stranger in foreign lands; he is a citizen in every state, and fearlessly despises the awkward chances of fortune; on the other hand, the person who thinks himself fortified and guarded by good fortune rather than by education, steps along slippery paths and struggles with a life unstable and insecure.*

(Theophrastus, cited by Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, VI Praef. 2)

**Professor Anna Chahoud, Chair of Latin, Trinity College Dublin**

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## Provost's Welcome

As Provost of Trinity College Dublin, it is my great pleasure to introduce this 2020-21 edition of our handbook for postgraduate research students.

A warm welcome to all our students who have joined Trinity this year, and I wish you all every success in your research. I sincerely hope that your time as a postgraduate researcher in this great centre of learning is a fulfilling one, and one in which you follow the tradition of many who have preceded you in adding to the stock of human knowledge and thereby having an impact on Ireland and the wider world.

Trinity is truly proud of its culture and heritage of research. As we look to our past – a past of great discoveries, Nobel prize winners and innumerable people who have helped to shape the world – we rightly feel pride. But primarily we are a university that looks forward, a university operating on the global stage and seeking to have a lasting and positive impact on the world. Our research is key to how we can have this impact and, most critically, by 'our research' I mean the research of the entire college community including, very importantly, our research postgraduates. The presence of each one of you within this research community is a cause of celebration and our hope for the future.

I wish you all the very best for your time in Trinity.

Patrick Prendergast  
PROVOST

## Dean's Welcome

As Trinity College's Dean of Graduate Studies it is my great pleasure to welcome you both to this student handbook and, more importantly of course, to this 425 year old university in which you will spend the next years of your life engaged in the work which, we hope, will ultimately lead to you obtaining the degree for which you are registered. Whether you are here studying for a PhD or for a Research Master's degree, it is my sincere hope that these years will be highly fulfilling for you in both academic and personal terms, as you become an indelible part of the history of this university which is ancient and steeped in history but which also constantly seeks to be forward-looking and innovative. Your story now becomes part of Trinity's story as we seek, as a community of students, faculty and alumni, to work to the betterment of national and global society in the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

I hope that this handbook is of use to you in the course of your studies. It contains useful information in relation to matters as diverse as the nature of the structured PhD, Trinity's sports facilities, the library and the various support services that operate, for you, throughout the university. It also contains perspectives on the nature of Postgraduate research and tips for maintaining a student/supervisor relationship from both staff and students.

In particular, I would really urge all students to study carefully the section on plagiarism. And I would encourage all *PhD* students to study the section on the structured PhD. Apart from giving insight into the mandatory *taught* elements of the PhD programme it provides useful information on the stages of the structured PhD and a useful 'Timelines and Targets' section. These will be invaluable to you in terms both of adhering to regulations and also of getting the most out of your 'Trinity experience'.

Beyond this, can I remind you that the full regulations governing your registration are contained in Part III of the college calendar (<https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/graduate-studies-higher-degrees/>) and specific information relevant to your particular situation may be contained in school or discipline handbooks. Other useful information can be found on our website <http://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/>. Lastly if you do have concerns at any stage during your course of study, please do liaise with people who can assist you – especially your supervisor, or the designated Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) within your school or discipline who has responsibility for research postgraduate students. Finally, my office is always available to deal with particular concerns and questions so please feel free to contact us if necessary.

All the very best to all of you as you start this very exciting journey!

Professor Martine Smith  
Dean of Graduate Studies

## 2. Introducing the Graduate Studies Office

The Dean of Graduate Studies Office is situated nearby the Academic Registry in the Watts Building in Trinity. The Dean's office links closely with the Academic Registry in relation to all matters pertaining to the registration, progression, assessment and graduation of postgraduate students.

**The Dean of Graduate Studies** is the college office with responsibility (under the College Statutes and College Calendar) for graduate students. The current Dean, Martine Smith, is a Professor in the School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Sciences. Her email is [dngrstd@tcd.ie](mailto:dngrstd@tcd.ie)

The **Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education**, provides leadership in the development of strategy and drives the development and review of academic policies in respect of Trinity's graduate education provision. He acts as a centre of expertise, advising and contributing to the College's wider objectives in respect of its graduate education provision and the student experience. The current post holder, Dr Cormac Doran can be contacted at [aasge@tcd.ie](mailto:aasge@tcd.ie)

The **Administrative Office** has responsibility for advising and assisting the Dean on all matters related to Graduate Studies policy and also provides invaluable advice and assistance to the college community where issues pertaining to graduate studies arise. The email to contact the Administrative Officer is [genadgso@tcd.ie](mailto:genadgso@tcd.ie)

Catherine Allen is the **Executive Officer/Dean's Secretary** in the Graduate Studies Office. She has a large number of functions in ensuring the smooth running of the office. In particular, she co-ordinates matters such as the travel grant scheme and the Provost's PhD Project Awards. Her email address is [Dean.GradSecretary@tcd.ie](mailto:Dean.GradSecretary@tcd.ie)

In addition, there are various communication points within the Academic Registry that may be useful to you during the course of your study.

If issues arise in relation to your studies that may mean that you need extensions for submission, time off books or some other concession, then you or more appropriately, your supervisor should contact the PG Cases team at [pgcases@tcd.ie](mailto:pgcases@tcd.ie)

For issues in relation to registration or admission onto the PhD register you should contact [research.admissions@tcd.ie](mailto:research.admissions@tcd.ie)

Finally, for issues in relation to the submission of your thesis (or indeed in relation to any matters when the thesis has been submitted, e.g. revisions) contact [gsothese@tcd.ie](mailto:gsothese@tcd.ie)

### 3. Postgraduate Research in Trinity College Dublin

Trinity College is proud of the fact that both historically and in the present, it is dedicated to and famous for the production of top quality and cutting-edge research. In this regard we fully recognise and acknowledge the remarkable work being undertaken by our Research Students in all disciplines and we are keenly aware of the extent to which our status as a research led university is dependent on and heightened by the research of our students. This plays out in a number of ways and, whereas, no doubt the capacity of our students to attract grant funding is one example, of far greater importance is the fruit of their research – in terms both of submitted dissertations, conference presentations and peer-reviewed published work. At its best, any university is a community dedicated to the enhancement of knowledge and understanding and for the betterment of humanity. It is a matter of celebration for us that you have joined *our* research community and we look forward to Trinity's reputation for research and your burgeoning reputation as scholars becoming interlinked.

In so far as the work of a Trinity College research student is concerned, the primary academic support and focus comes from within his or her school.

- At the heart of this is the student's supervisor(s) (see the section on supervision below).
- In addition for all PhD students registering from September 2019 onwards, a **thesis committee**, or equivalent structure, will be appointed.
- Depending on the specific supervisor and the nature of the student's project, s/he will be supported by the supervisor's research group or lab, and, potentially, the postdoctoral students working there.
- All schools also have a Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate (DTLP) with responsibility for all graduate students in that school.

Whereas different schools may, for example, operate supportive mechanisms, and your thesis committee will play a distinct role outlined below it is your supervisor and the DTLP (or, where appropriate the academic director of the Postgraduate Research Programme) who are the two primary people to whom, in the first instance, you should turn for academic support.

#### The Hallmarks of Successful Postgraduate Research

On this basis, what are the hallmarks of a successful Trinity postgraduate thesis at either Masters or PhD level? Precise criteria in this regard are laid down in Part III of the college Calendar (<https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/graduate-studies-higher-degrees/>) and these should of course be consulted by you as you determine the standards which you must hit. The standards that are required of a PhD thesis are of course higher than those required of a Masters, but in principle all successful theses will have certain key characteristics.

- They will demonstrate a deep and systematic understanding of the field of research and an awareness of existing scholarship in the area – in the context of which scholarship the submitted thesis will be situated.
- They will demonstrate a clear and appropriate research methodology and, more generally, they will show evidence of rigorous, clear and effective research in the relevant area.
- They will demonstrate significant skills of critical analysis and capacity to synthesise new and complex ideas.
- They will represent an effective communication of the ideas contained in the thesis, which, especially at PhD level, must represent an appreciable contribution to knowledge through originality and innovation.
- Very often the finished product will, either in whole or in part be accepted for peer-reviewed publication.

This is what you should be aiming for and it is our ambition that you will achieve this and our hope that we can help you to do so.

### **Trinity College – a Proud Member of the League of European Research Universities**

It is a mark of Trinity's international status as a Research-Led University that, in 2016 it was invited to join the 23 member League of European Research Universities (LERU). Membership of LERU, apart from being a recognition of our status, will generate any number of benefits for the research profile of Trinity. It will certainly galvanise research collaborations and the pursuit of best practice and it will heighten our already excellent reputation for research.

From the perspective of Doctoral Students, however, there is also the potential and tangible benefit of participation in the annual LERU Doctoral Summer School. Details of how to apply to attend at this school will be circulated in the spring (and it is a highly competitive process which ultimately results in us sending perhaps only one student to the event). In fact, in Spring 2021, we are very excited to tell you that Trinity College will be the hosting university! So this will be a superb opportunity for our research students to participate in what promises to be a wonderful educational experience.

In July 2019 **Gemma O'Sullivan** attended this summer school, hosted by the University of Edinburgh. Here is her account of what happened and how it benefited her work.

"Being part of a team is considering the human". Professor Melissa Terras,  
University of Edinburgh

-- **Gemma O'Sullivan, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland**

Most people who have undertaken a doctorate will appreciate that academia is not necessarily a team sport. Likewise, the university system, like many environments, can be deeply hierarchical. The two biggest factors that mitigate against authentic collaboration? Individualism and hierarchy.



This summer, I was one of 50 early-career researchers from Europe's leading research-intensive universities attending the League of European Research Universities (LERU) doctoral summer school on collaboration in Edinburgh. Speakers numbered hugely successful researchers whose various projects have been funded to the tune of multiple millions and whose results have created social change in crucial ways however larger or small. Amid the project plans and logistics, funding mechanisms and co-authoring conflicts, they each seemed to arrive at the same point: the successes and failures of projects depended on collaboration or the "human in the team".

My own research delves into how successful collaboration can support educational change. I ask how we can build collaboration in universities to create a dynamic educational system that addresses 21<sup>st</sup> century global challenges. Initiatives such as the new European university CHARM-EU, of which Trinity is a key partner, are one of a growing number of educational collaborations that focus on educating students and researchers to tackle challenges that are too complex to be solved by a single discipline.

My fellow researchers at the LERU summer school are multi- or trans disciplinary, tackling issues such as ageing, cancer, conflict, data verification, information oversaturation and climate change. They integrate multiple fields of expertise (and several languages) with a common desire and need to collaborate. During an intensive week of workshops, we produced a guide to collaboration and two key themes emerged: To collaborate successfully, teams need a negotiated (and monitored) plan for open communication and a flat organisational structure. Both of these sound easy, if not obvious, and yet they are the biggest obstacles to success.

A flat organisational structure means treating everyone on the team equally, regardless of where they sit on the food chain. Within their partnership agreement, one researcher said they had inserted a "code of behaviour". This might include a conflict management plan, space for frequent face-to-face meetings and a transparent communication system that gives equal access to all information and data. Early career researchers are integrated, and seasoned PIs lend advice and expertise in an open, democratic manner. This requires a clearly identified leader who is in their position not solely due to domain experience but because they are good at leading – and communicating.

Active listening and open communication are, we learned, skills that can and should be developed. As a journalist, I found that people engage when you actually listen. When you are authentic, it has a domino effect: trust emerges, barriers come down, people relax. It seems obvious but to genuinely you connect, you need to, well, genuinely connect. Too often, team members (we are all guilty) nod vigorously, appearing to listen when they are actually just waiting for their turn to speak. You can embed this awareness in any group through training and workshops and by making space and time to support agreed goals and techniques.

Research leaders said “soft” skills development needs to be prioritised in planning and training in the same way that hard skills are. This means accessing expert advice, making a communication plan and negotiating how your team plans to communicate (down to which software application is liked by all). When dealing with multi-disciplinary teams of any size, you might consider creating an integration framework. You may think you are listening but have you really integrated another perspective: can you identify it, name it, track it? Likewise, a neutral party is highly valuable: someone who can take responsibility for mediating conflict; manage the integration of divergent viewpoints; and navigate subtle divergences in culture, person and discipline.

Researchers spoke passionately about how the personal – the dinner in the evenings, the face-to-face meeting, the shared flight, the chat on the commute home, that natural connection – had made the crucial difference between a collaborative project’s success and failure; or the infrequently cited measure of impact – your, and your colleagues’, sense of worth. How do you know if the project was a success, one researcher posited? You like each other at the end. Having deliberately frank open discussions at the outset, and throughout, as well as treating those ‘soft skills’ as seriously as you do ‘hard skills’, will go a long way to making sure you do.

*Research Collaborations: A Guide for Early Career Researchers is available here:*  
<https://www.leru.org/files/News/Research-Collaborations-A-guide-for-early-career-researchers.pdf>

#### 4. Trinity's Structured PhD

All Trinity PhDs are now 'structured doctorates' irrespective of how they are funded. In essence this means that they are four-year full time or six-year part time degrees (see the section on timelines and targets) where students are required to fulfil criteria at the end of each academic year. This does not mean that students cannot submit their PhD theses before four or six years – they can, albeit that, for part-time students this may have additional fee implications. But our structured doctorates are set up as four-year degrees and we make provision for incremental stages along the journey during this four-year time period.

Furthermore, as is discussed shortly, under our structured doctorate model, students are required to participate in *taught modules* and obtain between 10 and 30 ECTS in doing so during the lifespan of their PhD research. This is a University wide requirement. Your School may have specific and bespoke requirements as to how these credits are obtained or which modules must be undertaken. It is important that you familiarise yourself with these requirements – your school postgraduate handbook should be helpful in this regard. Please be aware that all incoming students *must* take part in a 5 credit module in Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era.

##### The Stages of the Structured PhD

In terms of the process for the structured PhD, the first requirement (following admission of a student to the PhD register) is that, in conjunction with your supervisor, your thesis committee (or equivalent) and the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) for your school, you will submit a progress report to the school at the end of your first year of study. A student who does *not* submit this progress report will not be permitted to register for their second year. Moreover, it is perfectly possible for a school to refuse to allow a student to proceed to the second year on register if progress, as outlined in the report has not been satisfactory. Similarly a progress report must be submitted for all PhD students at the end of their *third* year (and again, registration for a fourth year is contingent upon submission of a complete and satisfactory progress report). For **part-time** students, progress reports must be submitted at the end of their first, second, fourth and fifth years on register.

A particularly critical development for full-time students occurs about halfway through your **second year** on the register - the **confirmation process** takes place at around 18 months from your initial registration. For part time students, this takes place in their third year, around their 30<sup>th</sup> month on register. Students who started on the research Masters register but wish to convert to the PhD register will undertake what is termed a 'transfer process' identical in all respects to the confirmation process. This is organised at school level and details of precisely what it entails will be given to you by the school DTLPG or their delegate – all confirmation processes will at minimum include submission of a piece of work and an oral interview (**viva**) with your thesis committee. The procedure is aimed at ensuring that you are sufficiently on track and can, sufficiently, demonstrate that you are capable, ultimately of achieving

the PhD, and that it is appropriate that your registration as a PhD student should be maintained.

A student who fails his or her confirmation interview may (a) be discontinued on the register (b) granted permission to submit a thesis for a lower degree (M.Litt/MSc) or (c) be permitted to re-submit work for a second and final confirmation interview within roughly six weeks. Where a student fails the second confirmation interview, then [s]he cannot submit for a PhD but instead (depending on what the confirmation panel decides) may either be removed from the register or, alternatively may be given permission to write up and submit for a Master's degree. The confirmation interview, thus, is an extremely important part of the structured PhD, and it is by no means uncommon for students to fail to cross this hurdle.

In reality, however, the entire PhD process, from originally devising a research question right through to ultimate submission of the final thesis is a structured and incremental one. At all stages in the process it is vital that you, along with your supervisor and your school have a clear sense of the direction in which it is headed, and reasonable confidence that the project that you are undertaking is capable of hitting the standards required of a successful PhD thesis. Furthermore, at all stages it is important that you grow intellectually in and through your work. In other words, every stage of the structured PhD process (like every book you read, every dataset you analyse and every supervision meeting you arrange) represents a learning process, so that, following completion of the degree you will not merely be an expert in the field of study covered by your thesis, but you will also have grown intellectually, to doctoral level, in a broader sense.

### **Taught Elements within the Structured PhD**

From the University's standpoint, students must study a minimum of taught components equating to 10-ECTS credits. Having said that you should be aware that your particular school may have specific requirements that require you to obtain more than 10-ECTS of credit or may specify modules that you must take to fulfil their requirements. As such it is hugely important that you familiarise yourself with the specific requirements within your individual school. Students will be registered on SITS to the modules that they undertake (including the mandatory module on 'Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era').

For students who are not constrained by the approach in their school, there is a vast array of options available to you to fulfil the taught components of the structured PhD. All of these options are identified on our website at <http://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/>. Rather than refer to them all, it would, perhaps be helpful to highlight some key points:

- (a) There is a range of generic skills modules which are offered by the Graduate Studies Office, the Library and Trinity College Student Learning and Development all of which should provide students with invaluable skills that will both assist them in their PhD work but will also be useful generally. I urge

- you to look at these carefully and see if one looks ideal for you – especially if you are in your first year of study. Each of these modules is outlined briefly below. In particular, I would, again draw your attention to the fact that *all* incoming students from September 2018 onwards are required to take the 5- ECTS module in ‘Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era’.
- (b) Provided that the module lecturer and your supervisor/DTLP are in agreement and there is capacity, students can fulfil their taught requirements by studying any of the thousands of modules on any of our level 9 taught master’s courses.
  - (c) As is detailed later, students can study for the Graduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship through the Trinity Innovation Academy. If a student chooses to complete all 30-ECTS of modules and take the certificate award, then this cannot count towards their structured PhD (as this would mean that the same modules would count towards two different university qualifications). On the other hand, students who do *not* obtain the certificate can use credits obtained from having successfully completed particular modules within the Innovation Academy course towards their structured PhD requirements.
  - (d) Similarly, many PhD students register for our Postgraduate Certificate in Statistics to help them develop the skills required to analyse their data. Information on this course is available at <https://www.scss.tcd.ie/postgraduate/pgcertstats/>. Again as this is a separate 30 ECTS course with its own award, where students successfully complete the certificate and are issued with the award, credits obtained in the process cannot count towards their structured PhD, but if students do *not* complete the certificate, then modules undertaken can count towards the structured PhD taught credit requirement.
  - (e) Registered Ph.D. students on particular named thematic programmes can avail of modules delivered in any of our partner universities in Ireland under an inter-institutional agreement that is in place. Your supervisor will be able to advise if you can avail of this.
  - (f) Finally, we are constantly seeking to increase and improve our offerings of structured PhD modules and we will be in touch with you throughout the year to let you know of any relevant developments in this regard.

I would urge you to think carefully about the modules that you choose for ECTS credit purposes and to study the options that are available to make the best possible choice for yourselves. Even though the idea of a research student taking taught modules may seem odd or unnecessary at first glance, we have countless examples of students who say that the classes that they attended as part of the structured PhD – whether discipline led, generic, or a taught masters module – were profoundly enriching and meant that the entire PhD journey was an intellectually satisfying one. We are profoundly aware that, for many of you, the PhD is both an end in itself but also a means to another end – a career either inside or outside the academy. We genuinely believe that the skills developed through the *taught* components of the structured PhD will stand to you both in the course of your PhD studies and beyond them.

Finally please be aware that it is not possible for a student to be examined in relation to his or her PhD thesis unless his or her DTLP indicates on the relevant form that the student has fulfilled the requirements of the structured PhD. Indeed more generally, a student cannot be invited to register for the next year of his/her studies unless and until his/her school confirms that [s]he has fulfilled all the structured PhD requirements of the previous year. In other words, it is vital that you do complete the taught modules and other structured components that are required.

### **Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era – MANDATORY MODULE.**

This module aims to introduce participants from a diverse range of backgrounds to the existing and emerging challenges and opportunities connected with researching, presenting and publishing in an open scholarship era. The concept of open scholarship has radically altered the way in which academic research operates in Europe, providing both opportunities and challenges for research students. All of the major funders in Europe and in Ireland now require compliance with open research mandates as a condition of funding. In addition, funders are increasingly demanding that researchers, including research students, must, as a pre-requisite to securing grant funding, have undertaken some training in research ethics. Finally, there are increasing pressures on students, as they conduct research, to be aware of and comply with obligations under intellectual property and data protection law and indeed to ensure the proper management of their research data. This course seeks to provide all Trinity PhD students with the tools necessary to navigate these issues as they proceed with their research.

The module is run collaboratively by the Graduate Studies Office and the College Library. All of the module's teaching staff are internal to Trinity and have research interests and skills in the relevant areas. Students will be required to undertake a research integrity course provided by Epigeum as a licensed ready-made package. Integrated with this, and delivered alongside it via Blackboard, are the bespoke elements of the course which will be provided by Ms Niamh Brennan (College Library), Dr Geoff Bradley (IT Services) and Professor Eoin O'Dell (Law School).

All incoming PhD students are required to undertake this module prior to being confirmed on the PhD register as part of the official confirmation process. Research masters students who wish to transfer to the PhD register must also complete the module as a pre-requisite to any such transfer. In both these cases the student takes the module for credit and as part of the taught components of the structured PhD. In addition, however, other research masters students can apply to take the module though not for credit.

The course is delivered online and may be taken at any stage prior to a student undertaking his or her confirmation/transfer process. The course accounts for 5 ECTS (100 student effort hours). In order to accrue the 5 ECTS, participants will be expected

to complete the various online components of the course and the prescribed assessments.

A suite of workshops will comprise the course, focusing on the challenges and opportunities referenced above. Alongside the Epigeum component on Research Integrity, students will undertake TCD-developed online workshops on:

- Research Ethics;
- Intellectual Property and Data Protection;
- Research Data Management and the Construction and Application of Data Management Plans;
- Research Communication and Impact in an Open Scholarship era.

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Apply the highest standards of ethical integrity in their research.
2. Understand the basic principles of intellectual property law as they apply to their research.
3. Appreciate the application of Data Protection law in the context of postgraduate research
4. Apply best practice standards in research data management and develop an effective Data Management Plan for their research.
5. Demonstrate awareness of the opportunities that open scholarship provides for them to ensure that their research has maximum impact.

Students' performance on the module is evaluated on the basis of undertaking the workshops and a successful pass on the assigned assessments. Participation and successful completion of assignments are compulsory. The module will be assessed on a pass or fail standard. The pass standard is 40%. Candidates who fail or fail to complete must re-take the module.

## Planning and Managing your Research and your Career (PMRC)

This innovative 5-credit ECTS module will equip you, the PhD student, with the skills necessary to successfully plan and manage your research and career, and thereby ensure full contribution of your knowledge and skills to wider society. You will have the opportunity to develop specific research, career management and employability skills and the chance to interact with other PhD students from across the College to share your experiences and strategies.

The PMRC module is designed to maximise flexibility and enable you to tailor the learning to your own personal and professional development needs, by allowing you to choose from a variety of accredited experiential workshops which are provided by Student Learning Development, the Careers Service and other associated services in College (IT Services and the Library).

### Research

In this module:

- You will be equipped with strategies and tools to manage your approach to the research process effectively (e.g. planning and creating a thesis template, developing critical writing skills, viva and oral defence preparation)
- You will receive guidance on planning and time management, including dealing with procrastination, balancing demands and managing stress
- You will learn how to effectively communicate your research knowledge through posters, oral presentations, curriculum vitae and at interview.

### Career

In this module:

- You will reflect on the skills you have to offer, improve your application and interview skills and develop a career action plan going forward, considering both academic and non-academic careers
- You will gain knowledge of how to source relevant opportunities and undertake strategies for taking a creative approach to job-seeking including networking
- You will also identify factors that impact on teams and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your own personal team working style.

The PMRC module is assessed through evidence of the practical application of employability, self-management and research skills, including submission of a personal plan for individual research and career building strategies, creation of a conference poster and/or delivering a presentation and submission of a CV and cover letter tailored to a particular academic or non-academic position.

**For further information, please contact the Module Co-ordinators: Dr. Tamara O' Connor, Student Learning Development ([toconnor@tcd.ie](mailto:toconnor@tcd.ie)) or Fiona Hayes, Careers Service ([fiona.hayes@tcd.ie](mailto:fiona.hayes@tcd.ie)).**



## Teaching and Supporting Learning as a Graduate Teaching Assistant

This module is a 5-ECTS module run by Academic Practice & eLearning. The programme provides an opportunity for postgraduate tutors, demonstrators and graduate teaching assistants from across the disciplines to come together to critically reflect on their role as a Teaching Assistants. It is of invaluable assistance for those PhD students who will also work as teaching assistants or demonstrators and indeed for students who have ambitions towards a career as lecturers.

Drawing on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SofTL) model, the module exposes postgraduates to the educational discourses on teaching and learning at university level. Participants develop an individual teaching philosophy and use theory and reflection to explore the praxis of their teaching. This takes place within a supportive peer group who share practice, insight, and pedagogical concerns to develop a scholarly approach to teaching, assessment and evaluation, using evidence and critical reflection.

Upon successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Reflect on the tasks and responsibilities associated with your role;
- Practice some appropriate communication and coping strategies;
- Select and apply some relevant theories of learning to your teaching;
- Design a teaching session plan;
- Use technology to enhance your students' learning;
- Support assessment of, for and as learning;
- Reflect on your own learning as a teaching assistant.

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This module is designed for blended or online delivery; it covers 7 topics presented in Blackboard Learn as blocks.

- Role of the Graduate Teaching Assistant
- Communications and Coping Strategies
- How Students Learn
- Session Planning
- Designing an Online Activity
- Assessment and Feedback
- Reflecting on and Evaluating your Teaching

### The Trinity Innovation Academy

Why not consider the possibility of fulfilling the taught components of your PhD within the Trinity Innovation Academy?

The Trinity Innovation Academy is an exciting intellectual space where PhD students interact in multi-disciplinary groups with faculty, entrepreneurs and industry mentors from public and private sector organisations. The Academy was established in 2010 to develop a new kind of PhD graduate, expert in their discipline, but with a thorough understanding of how innovation can convert knowledge into products, services and policies for economic, social and cultural benefit.

The Academy offers a Graduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (30-ECTS) to PhD Students from Trinity and Queens University Belfast. This unique inter-institutional cohort encompasses a variety of disciplinary domains from both universities. Innovation is considered in the broadest sense of exploiting new ideas in a competitive world; it is not restricted to science, engineering, technology and business, but encompasses creativity, leadership, cultural and policy innovation in the arts and humanities. Such diversity in the student body sets this initiative apart as particularly innovative in its own right.

The Graduate Certificate aims to provide skills in innovation and entrepreneurship currently lacking in many Irish PhD programmes and will set graduates apart as having this uniquely transferrable skillset. In the course of the programme, students are encouraged to uncover and exploit potential within their thesis research. To achieve this, students collaborate with industry partners on a variety of projects, gaining invaluable experience. This experience enables students to explore and develop their research in new and innovative ways. The course is modular in structure, incorporating modules on creative thinking and innovation, opportunity generation and recognition, intellectual property, venture planning and finance. Our PhD candidates can take modules to fulfil the taught components of their structured PhD or can take the whole Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship as a separate qualification (in which case the modules taken do not count towards the structured PhD ECTS requirement).

Information on how to apply is available through the front page of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies website at <http://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/> or from the team in the Innovation Academy at [info@innovationacademy.ie](mailto:info@innovationacademy.ie)

## Targets and Timelines for the Structured PhD

All PhDs (and all PhD students) are different and therefore it is probably impossible to suggest a definitive timeline for work that applies to all students. The suggested timelines and targets below are, therefore, indicative. These will tend to be agreed between the supervisor and the student and there will be certain things (e.g. seeking ethics approval, risk assessment of field-based activities and even data collection) which will be more likely to apply in science rather than arts research. In other words, do not feel constrained by these timelines – they are intended merely for guidance.

Time	Task
Before commencement of doctoral study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of research subject</li> <li>• Assignment of supervisor and approval of application by School and Dean of Graduate Studies</li> <li>• Ensuring that funding is in place</li> <li>• PG Students orientation events</li> <li>• Relax and have fun</li> </ul>
During the first months of doctoral study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with supervisor(s) to ensure a clear understanding of your research question.</li> <li>• Familiarise yourself with what is expected of you in so far as the taught element of the structured PhD is concerned.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is a clear agreement between you and your supervisors in terms of what is expected of you and how your supervision relationship will proceed.</li> <li>• Ensure that you have a suitable data management plan in place, and more generally, that you are aware of College rules pertaining to use, ownership and management of data.</li> <li>• Ensure that you are aware of any requirement to obtain ethical approval for any element of your work.</li> <li>• Relax and have fun</li> </ul>
During the first semester of doctoral study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of thesis research schedule (specified for first year, comprehensive outline for subsequent years)</li> <li>• Try to ensure that you have completed a sufficient body of work (whether in the form of data collection or writing) that you have confidence proceeding to the next semester</li> <li>• Consider whether to apply to be an exam invigilator</li> <li>• Relax and have fun</li> </ul>

During the first year of doctoral study (first two years for part-time students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance of any formal modules or programme requirements as laid down by the School in so far as the structured PhD is concerned</li> <li>• Specification of research plan for second year</li> <li>• Take stock to ensure that you are 'on track' in so far as your initial plans are concerned</li> <li>• Preparation for confirmation process</li> <li>• Submission of progress report by student and supervisor</li> <li>• Relax and Have fun</li> </ul>
During the second year of study (3 <sup>rd</sup> year for part-time students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of confirmation process (including submission of confirmation report and attendance at confirmation interview)</li> <li>• Specification of detailed research plan for remaining year(s)</li> <li>• Ensure that your research has really started to take shape and that you are not falling behind in so far as the timelines that you and your supervisor have set are concerned.</li> <li>• Relax and Have fun</li> </ul>
During the third/fourth year of study (fifth/sixth year for part time students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of research</li> <li>• Final write-up of thesis</li> <li>• Submission of thesis</li> <li>• Nomination of examiners</li> <li>• <i>Viva Voce</i> exam</li> </ul>

**Note: Timelines for these activities may in part be discipline dependent.**

Finally, there may be various other issues that will arise in the course of particular research projects. Amongst these, the following tend to be prominent.

- Agreement of schedule for and preparation of progress reports to funders
- Agreement on approaches for ensuring appropriate data security and record keeping
- Career planning and job search activities
- Commencement of fieldwork
- Ethical review/Ethical approval (as and if required)
- Field trip planning
- Health & Safety instructions/certifications
- Negotiation of access to field sites/samples
- Pilot study

- Preparation of conference papers
- Preparation of journal submissions
- Pre-test of instruments/experimental manipulations etc.
- Professional registration and formal clearances (e.g., Garda clearance if research is planned with children or vulnerable adults; etc.)

## Submission and Examination

The final piece of the jigsaw for research postgraduate students relates to submission and examination (and this may well seem a very long way off to those of you entering into your first year!) But it is a critical final piece and so it is worth focusing on in some detail.

All Theses (PhD or Research Masters) are submitted in the first instance, to Academic Registry, in electronic copy. It is hoped that, during the 2020 -21 academic year, we will move to a system of electronic submission of theses and I will be in touch with you in relation to any developments in this area. Students must complete and submit and Intention to submit form to the Academic Registry (via [gsothesis@tcd.ie](mailto:gsothesis@tcd.ie)) This allows Academic Registry to set up and receive the electronic copy, and triggers all the subsequent steps in the examination process. The form should be submitted one month in advance of your intended date for submitting your Thesis.

As you will read in the calendar, there is a maximum word count (100,000 for a PhD, 60,000 for a Masters which *includes* appendices but not footnotes). Theses that exceed this word count will be returned to the student for resubmission. Part III of the College Calendar includes details of what must be included with the thesis (e.g. declaration, abstract and so on) as well as details of requirements in terms of spacing, font size etc. Finally in the 'library' section of this handbook, you will find details of our open access policy and the fact that students must now submit their final approved theses electronically (and also the rules on when a 'stay' may be sought on the availability of thesis in the library – typically when there is a need for it to remain confidential for a period of time).

Theses must be submitted by the end of the month preceding that on which you registered (i.e. if your registration was in September then you must submit by end of August). On the other hand, there is a convention that students are entitled to **Dean's Grace** which is, in effect, an additional month to submit. (So in reality someone who registers in September will, some years later, submit by end of September). In exceptional circumstances and on the application of his or her supervisor a student may be granted an extended Dean's grace.

Once you have submitted your thesis, your school will be sent an 'examiner nomination form'. In many cases supervisors discuss potential examiners with students and then the school DTLP will nominate an examiner who is appointed by the Dean (and bear in mind that this does *not* mean that a student has any *right* to be involved in the appointment of his or her examiners). The thesis is then sent out for

examination, with the process, taking a minimum of eight weeks and sometimes taking much longer due to the availability of appropriate examiners!

For a research master's thesis, the examiners may award the degree as it stands, or with minor corrections, may return it for major revisions and re-examination (with no guarantee that the revised thesis will be awarded the degree) or may fail it. If either of the latter two options are possible, the examiners must schedule a **viva voce** (oral exam) giving the student an opportunity to defend the thesis.

For a PhD thesis, there is always a **viva voce** exam, a rigorous and robust oral defence of the thesis by its author. Thereafter the examiners may award the degree as it stands, or with minor corrections, may return it for major revisions and re-examination (with no guarantee that the revised thesis will be awarded the degree) may award a lower degree (that is, a masters) or may fail it. In the case of both a master's degree and a PhD where the thesis is referred for major revisions and re-examination, there is no second *viva voce* exam but both examiners must submit new examination reports. Students are encouraged to work with supervisors in preparation for their *viva* exams and, should their thesis be referred for revision and re-examination, must work with their supervisor/s in relation to the revision process.<sup>1</sup> Finally, you will be sent a copy of our new 'Viva guide' for postgraduate students and, whereas for incoming students, the *viva* may seem a very long way off, I hope that it will be of some use to you when the time comes around.

In either case, when the degree is eventually awarded the student must submit the thesis electronically and also in hard copy (see the section below in relation to open access). Thereafter, the award of the degree is approved by the Higher Degrees Sub Committee of University Board and Council and the student may proceed to graduation.

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<sup>1</sup> Details in relation to the fee implications of a thesis being referred for revision and re-examination are available from the Academic Registry at <http://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/fees-payments/>

## 5. Supervision and the Student/Supervisor Relationship

At the heart of a really fulfilling PhD experience is the concept of quality supervision. In Trinity we are committed to ensuring that all PhD students are supervised effectively. On the other hand, it is recognised that there is no such thing as a 'one size fits all' approach to supervision. Rather the definition of quality supervision in any context depends on the student, their needs, the supervisor and the project. Thus some of you will be jointly supervised by two or even a panel of supervisors whereas others will have a single supervisor. Some of you will meet your supervisors every week whereas others will meet less frequently. Some supervisors will provide more detailed comments on thesis drafts than will others. But the point is that it is not the case that one model is *better* than another. Rather what is important is that the model that applies in your case is one that works for you and your supervisor and, ultimately, that leads to your final thesis as well as your overall 'PhD journey' being as fulfilling as possible.

For all PhD students who come onto our research postgraduate register from September 2019 onwards, their school will appoint a **thesis committee**, comprising your principal and, where appropriate, secondary supervisor and two other people. Different schools may operate different variants of what this entails, but in most schools the thesis committee will be involved in the progression stages of the structured PhD (that is, in the completion of progress reports or the confirmation process). Finally, if you have concerns with the supervision that you are receiving (or any other real and pressing concerns with your supervisor) this is something that you can raise with members of your thesis committee.

It is important, however, to remember that ultimate responsibility for your thesis rests with you. Your supervisor, who will, of course, quite possibly have several PhD students and a number of postdoctoral students, is there to guide you, to help you to develop your ideas and to review your draft chapters so that their quality can be improved, but [s]he is not there to write your thesis, to be the innovative force behind it or indeed to improve the standard of written English in it! Occasionally we have had situations where students who have, for example, failed their PhDs, subsequently seek to blame their supervisors for this and inevitably the response is that it is the student and only the student who takes responsibility for the final submission (thus under our rules, no complaints against supervisors can be entertained following submission of the thesis).

Having said that and even though there is no singular model for 'good supervision', it is important that you do receive effective supervision (and this is a two way street with input from both you and your supervisor). If you feel that the supervision you are receiving is of poor quality or that, for whatever reason, there is some breakdown in the *supervision* relationship between you and your supervisor (and even if there is no breakdown in your *personal* relationship), it is vital that this is dealt with as soon as possible by communicating either with the other members of your thesis committee or with the DTLP in your school or, in unusual cases, with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

On the other hand, such breakdowns in relationship happen very, very rarely! So for most of you what is important is not to maintain a problematic relationship but getting the most out of an already effective one. That being the case, what follows are the views of an experienced supervisor and a student with tips for how to get the most out of a supervision relationship.

### **Tips on developing and maintaining a constructive working relationship with your supervisor (from a supervisor's perspective)**

Martin Fellenz, Trinity Business School

Over the years I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with many talented and highly motivated doctoral students. In fact, when I think of my best experiences working with doctoral students, the task of writing down tips on how to develop and maintain good working relationships appears unnecessary. However, relationships don't always work out well, and there is both effort and goodwill required from both sides to avoid and/or overcome problems that may - and often do - arise.

For any doctoral student, your supervisor<sup>2</sup> will be the most important person in your progress through the PhD programme. And while good interpersonal relationships are helpful and do often develop, supervisor-student relationships are first and foremost working relationships designed to support the students in their research as well as in their learning and development.

In my view these are two related but separate goals. The only good Ph.D. thesis is a completed one, so the focus on research progress in the relationship is paramount. However, if you come out of your doctoral studies with a successfully defended thesis and nothing else, you have missed a lot of important opportunities. Developing research skills and research-related knowledge is crucial, but developing yourself as a person and preparing for your further career by developing a broader skillset is also a priority. The quality of supervision, and the nature of the student-supervisor relationship is central for all these outcomes to be fully achieved. And while it ultimately takes two to make this work, there are many ways in which you as the student can facilitate a good working relationships.

The short version of what I will talk about could be summarised with two points: To develop and maintain a constructive working relationship between research student and supervisor it is crucial to (a) make your mutual expectations clear to each other, and (b) base your interactions on mutual respect. I will discuss some relevant thoughts under these two general headings below.

#### **Clarifying mutual expectations and responsibilities**

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<sup>2</sup> For stylistic reasons I will talk about individual supervisors only but all points made also apply to students with co-supervisors.



To many the idea of clarifying mutual expectations will seem obvious, and to others it will appear unnecessary. However, I am often amazed with what remains unspoken and even unknown about the respective expectations and responsibilities of supervisor and research student. Many of the formal responsibilities for both are clarified in official rules and regulations (see for example the College Calendar and the published “Best Practice Guidelines on Research Supervision”), but in every student-supervisor relationship some aspects benefit from discussion and clarification. They include:

- **Research topic and approach**

In some disciplines students know exactly what their research topic, and possibly even what their research questions and methodology are when they register for their Ph.D. In other areas the initial topic choice is simply a point of departure that leads to often substantial change and development of the topic. It is imperative that both parties are clear about what level of commitment they have to the initial topic and proposal, and how they will work on the development of the topic (if any) and how unforeseen problems will be resolved (if they arise).

- *Publications, authorship, collaborations with others*

If you are just starting out as a research student, you may not be thinking about publications just yet, but there is no better time to discuss both your plans and potentially thorny issues such as authorship and potential collaborations with researchers other than your supervisor at the beginning of your work together.

For most academics authorship and the personal and professional recognition that goes with it are very important. Decisions about such issues can quickly become emotional and even conflictual, and it is much easier to agree on a joint approach before there are actual decisions to be made. Explicit discussion and an agreement that is formally recorded (even if just in an email to confirm what was discussed and agreed in a meeting) can prevent such problems from arising later.

Different disciplines have different approaches to authorship, so whatever you agree should reflect values and customs in your discipline(s). In many areas in the social sciences, for example, it would be seen as unethical for anyone but the student to be first author on publications arising out of the thesis research (with some rare exceptions). Similarly, providing research funding, access for data collection, or any form of hierarchical relationship would not provide acceptable grounds for recognition through authorship. In any case, the respective roles and the resulting authorship arrangement of any collaborative research should be discussed as early as possible – this is the best way to avoid later difficulties.

Collaborative research with third parties should also be discussed with your supervisor. If they are compatible with your workload they may offer great learning, publication and networking opportunities, but it is something you should bring up, discuss and mutually agree.

- *Communication, meetings and documentation of agreements*

The formal College regulations and guidelines specify minimum requirements here, but it is useful to agree on how you want to work together. How often, where and when do you meet; how do you communicate with each other; when are drafts

submitted; when, in what format, and how often is feedback provided; and similar aspects should be discussed and agreed. And any agreements (as well as other aspects of such meetings) should be documented to provide clarity for both parties. An easy way to do this is by keeping minutes of the meetings. That can be quite informal, and I often send a quick email with notes, agreements and next steps/expectations to my students (or ask them to prepare them and send them to me). This creates clarity and any misunderstandings can be clarified before they turn into something bigger.

- *Schedules, work progress, deadlines*

Some supervisors insist on specific and detailed plans with exact deadlines and deliverables, others are less concerned about this. But at any stage both student and supervisor should know what the next step(s) are, and have at the very least a rough idea and agreement on when these steps should be completed. This is useful for students because of the direction and structure such work plans provide, and for supervisors because they can best support the student's work and evaluate the progress made which helps to alert them to any potential problems early.

Given the multitude of demands and responsibilities most supervisors are dealing with, adherence to agreed deadlines and submission dates is crucial to enable them to provide timely feedback. In case of delays it is always useful to alert the supervisor as early as possible and to consider a renegotiation of the relevant deadlines. If this becomes a repeated or even regular occurrence, however, there may be an underlying problem that needs to be addressed. Both parties are better off if overly ambitious schedules, unforeseen problems with data collection or other research elements, or inefficient work approaches are identified and jointly resolved.

- *Mentoring, networking and career development*

Different supervisors will have different approaches to this, but for me an active interest in and support for the career plans of my students is an integral part of the working relationship. This includes discussions of what and how much teaching may be useful for developing a teaching portfolio and skills; which conferences may offer the best opportunities for professional networking; and similar aspects that help students prepare for their intended career. For students, having the chance to start building their own professional network, and for potentially leveraging the professional contacts of their supervisor is immensely valuable. This is a privilege that many supervisors will not necessarily extend automatically, so it is good to understand if and under what conditions supervisors will offer such opportunities.

### **Exercising mutual respect**

Compared to many other institutions - especially foreign ones - the Trinity approach provides little formal authority to the supervisors. In other academic institutions and traditions supervisors often have a central part in the examination of the doctoral thesis, or must sign off on the thesis before it can be submitted for examination. The only similar power that supervisors here in Trinity have is their ability to comment on their students' progress in the annual progress report, or possibly to comment on their students' performance as part of the process of confirmation on the doctoral register. Nevertheless, by its very nature the supervisor-student relationship is unequal.

How this unequal relationship is enacted, however, depends very much on the people involved. To make this work, mutual respect between student and supervisor is crucial. This includes the recognition that, ultimately, students must be active and self-responsible decision makers - in fact, the Trinity approach to doctoral education requires that students must develop the ability to decide themselves if their work is of acceptable standard for a doctorate.

To facilitate mutual respect, some of the most important ingredients are courtesy and appropriate interpersonal conduct (including active listening; appropriate body language; etc.) which helps to elicit reciprocal behaviour from the supervisor. While this sounds easy in theory, the nature of the work often makes this harder. One of the central roles of supervisors is to evaluate and comment on student work and progress to provide both *formative* (aimed at identifying strengths and weakness in students' performance to aid their learning and development) and *summative* (aimed at comparative assessment of students' performance to enable them to develop relevant quality evaluation skills) feedback to students. And even the most constructive and learning-oriented students will find it often hard to receive feedback that paints their efforts in a less favourable light than they may expect (or hope). Many supervisors inadvertently or deliberately gloss over the difficulty this creates for students, and many students find it difficult not to take negative feedback personally.

In a strong, respectful and explicitly developmental relationship such difficulties can usually be openly acknowledged and discussed, but due to the lack of awareness, lack of motivation, lack of skill, or for a variety of other reasons this is sometimes not the case. In such circumstances it is important for students to control their emotional reaction and remain focused on maintaining a positive and open mind and a courteous and appropriate interpersonal style of interaction (of course it is just as important for supervisors to maintain a supportive and respectful demeanour). One of the most useful approaches to achieve this is to adopt an explicit focus on learning and improvement. Negative summative feedback is most acceptable if it is offered as an improvement tool. If supervisors do not offer feedback in this format ("... here is how this could be further improved; ... here is what is missing to reach the required standard; ... here are some options for how this problem can be addressed ..."), students can ask deliberately for feedback in this format. Not all supervisors are willing or able to provide it, but even asking for feedback in this format can help student feel more in control and help buffer the negative impact of such feedback.

Balanced with courtesy and mutual respect an appropriate dose of assertiveness is also useful. Assertiveness is about recognising and addressing both one's own and the other's objectives, needs and interests in the relationship or interaction. If supervisors do not treat students with respect, if they do not adhere to mutual agreements, or if they do not deliver on their formal responsibilities, students should take note and consider how to address these issues. If they are rare or isolated instances it may be an option to tolerate them, but if they occur more often it is better to address them before such patterns become established and form the bedrock of the student-supervisor relationship.

I am sure that there are many other useful and important tips that could be of help to you. Talk to other experienced doctoral students and academic staff, to learn

from their experiences and to explore how you may be able to further improve your relationship with your supervisor. Also, note the assistance and supports offered by College that you may be able to draw on to address any difficulties that you might experience. And lastly: Best of luck with your studies!

### **Tips for Maintaining the Student Supervisor Relationship – the Student’s Perspective**

Lisanne Peters, GSU EMS faculty officer, PhD candidate, Centre for Research on Adaptive Nanostructures and Nanodevices (CRANN)

The relationship between a PhD supervisor and PhD student is essential to the successful completion of a PhD. The supervisor must supply a supportive and stimulating academic environment in which communication and mutual respect are the key. Regular communication, in person and by email, and involves a type of mentoring that is student centred with the goals of advancing knowledge and completing a PhD. Developing a constructive relationship and maintaining it over the duration of a PhD is a key component of the PhD process and potentially can lead to future collaborations, projects and publications for the student, supervisor and Trinity.

Especially in the first days/weeks of a PhD can be very confusing for the student. All the paperwork that needs to be filled out, new colleagues, lab/tool trainings, settling in... Therefore it is important if a supervisor can give some guidance through this period. This does not always have to be personal, but can also be a to-do list for all the administration and immigration details or a fellow PhD student or post-doc assigned to this job. Given that this will not interfere with their own work.

After the first period communication remains important and keeping tabs on the students work, by regular meetings and/or monthly reports can be an enormous help for both student and supervisor. These reports can indicate problems and issues with the research in an early stage and are at the same time a method to improve the communication skills of the student. To improve the communication skills presenting and discussing the work at meetings with other members of the group is advisable. Discussion will teach the student to defend his work, but can also lead to new insights from other angles which can only improve the quality of the work.

A last point of advice is to create a nice functioning team spirit in a research group. On short term competition between different students might seem preferable as to stimulate students to work harder but on long term cooperation between researchers/students will results in more progress. A friendly environment makes it easier for a student to work with and can prevent issues such as burn-outs.

## 6. Plagiarism

The concept of research integrity is a multi-faceted one that will mean different things for different students as they work on different projects. Some of you may need to obtain ethical approval for your work. In many cases it will be necessary for you to construct a detailed Data Management plan and to fulfil obligations in relation to data ownership and data curation. Indeed the critical nature of these obligations is the reason why we require all structured PhD students to undertake the taught module in Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era. For the purposes of this handbook, however, and while recognising that there is an obligation on all students as they conduct research and write their thesis, to behave ethically and with integrity in all that they do, it is appropriate to focus on one particular aspect of research integrity, namely the rules in relation to **plagiarism**.

### Plagiarism

From the University's perspective, plagiarism is one of the most serious of all disciplinary offences that can be committed by a postgraduate research student both because it very seriously strikes at the concept of research integrity and also because, in many cases, it implies that there are deficiencies in the research practice of the relevant student. Inevitably where plagiarism is suspected the process that follows is a deeply unpleasant one for the relevant student – and not least because, in Trinity any plagiarism, however unintentional, when committed by a postgraduate research student is deemed to constitute 'level four plagiarism' and hence cannot be dealt with locally within a school, but rather must be dealt with by the Junior Dean – the University's disciplinary officer. So for all of these reasons it is vital that students familiarise themselves with the college rules in relation to plagiarism and ensure that they do not commit the offence.

The rules for plagiarism in so far as Postgraduate Research Students are concerned, are laid down in Part III of the College Calendar and it is hugely important that you familiarise yourself with these rules. In addition, very helpful information about these rules and also the mandatory plagiarism tutorial that all students are required to take (ready, steady, write) is contained at <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism>. As a student it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the plagiarism regulations and requirements and I urge you in the strongest possible terms to do so.

All of the rules in relation to plagiarism are very important, but the following points are especially worth noting.

- (a) Plagiarism does not necessarily involve deliberate cheating. Very often it can occur as a result of sloppy research methodology where a student uses someone else's ideas without properly identifying the author of these ideas. It can also arise where a student directly quotes the words of an original author but does not make it clear that the author is actually being directly quoted. In

other words it is very important that your research methodology including your referencing style is precise and effective.

- (b) Plagiarism can arise not merely when a student uses the work of an established author but also, for example, when [s]he has been working as part of a project or in collaboration with his or her supervisor or a fellow student, includes the results of that study in his or her thesis but does not identify the part of the study for which [s]he is responsible or the fact that it represented a joint collaboration.
- (c) Plagiarism can arise where a student submits work for a degree having already submitted the same work or any part thereof for an award in any academic institution. On the other hand, it is *not* plagiarism for a student to include, as part of his or her thesis, work that has previously been published.
- (d) Plagiarism can also occur where students avail of any kind of professional copy-editing or proof reading service for their work.

Finally, as with so many matters connected with the business of being a research student, if you have any doubts about whether there may be plagiarism issues connected with your work, please liaise with your supervisor in respect of this.

## 7. The Trinity Library and Open Access Theses

**Niamh Brennan from the Trinity Library describes the new and very exciting developments in relation to the electronic submission of Theses and the consequent 'open access' nature of PG research theses from now on.**

### **Access All Areas: Trinity's eThesis Submission System Is Live!**

The traditional printed thesis has been described as the single most under-utilised research output. If that was ever true in Trinity, it is certainly no longer the case. College's new Electronic Thesis (eThesis) Submission System is a system for all research students whose theses have been examined and approved for the award of a PhD or a Masters by research degree. Trinity's electronic theses will be available on Open Access by default, but can have restricted access if necessary. Eligible students will upload the electronic version of their theses which will be archived and made available via [TARA](#) (Trinity's Access to Research Archive) and they will print the required hardbound copies from that electronic version. The process integrates up to five College systems including the RSS, TARA and SITS and is the result of a collaborative effort between the Library and Enovation Solutions, the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, Academic Registry and IT Services.

The system is designed to benefit the student by automating, streamlining and accelerating many aspects of the thesis deposit process. It benefits the Library by eliminating duplication, improving data quality and saving time, and it benefits the student and the University by maximising the scholarly, reputational and societal impact of the students' work. The initiative complements the Library's recent highly successful theses digitisation programme which made over 3,000 TCD theses available online.

### **'As open as possible, as restricted as necessary'.**

Open Access to research theses ensures their increased visibility and recognition along with that of the thesis author. When theses are made available on open access, their use increases exponentially. Trinity's eTheses will be automatically harvested by search engines, included in national and international portals (such as the [DART-Europe](#) eTheses Portal and the European Commission's [Zenodo](#) portal), indexed by databases and listed at the top of Google search pages. The likelihood of other scholars citing theses increases as a result of this visibility. Thesis citations can be tracked in Google Scholar and the Web of Science plans to add thesis citations to its coverage. Open Access eTheses are available to everybody, including policy-makers, professional practitioners, cultural leaders and citizen scientists and can add to the societal and reputational impact of their authors and of the University. Of course, access to eTheses can also be restricted via the Application for a Stay process (with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies) and this option is built in to the process.

### **How to submit your eThesis.**

Postgraduate students who have submitted their thesis for examination will receive a letter informing them of their results and of the next steps they must take. The letter will include information on the process and it will provide links and contact details for support. After all changes have been approved, and as a 'last step' before the degree can be awarded, it is necessary to submit your thesis both electronically and in hard copy. You will be told this when you are informed that your thesis has been approved for the degree!

One important thing to remember is that the eThesis has to be deposited first and the hardbound copies must be printed from that deposited eThesis. This is to ensure that all of the additional information created by the system is printed along with the Thesis. Instructions and files for printing are sent directly to The Thesis Centre from the eThesis Submission System – or the files can be downloaded and/or emailed to the printer of choice. Full information on eThesis submission is available on the Library's webpages via this link: <https://www.tcd.ie/library/support/submitting-theses.php> There you'll find a video describing the process from beginning to end along with a printable step-by-step guide and instructions on how to apply for a stay (should this be required).

For more information and support please contact Niamh Brennan ([niamh.brennan@tcd.ie](mailto:niamh.brennan@tcd.ie)) or Ashling Hayes ([hayesas@tcd.ie](mailto:hayesas@tcd.ie)).

### **Thanks**

The eThesis System would not have been possible without the support of Professor Neville Cox, former Dean of Graduate Studies and previous Deans of Graduate Studies, of Shane Collins and the TCD Graduate Students Union plus past GSU presidents and vice presidents, Helen Thornbury, previously of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Committee. The system and process was developed by the Library's Research Informatics team: Niamh Brennan, Ashling Hayes and Kevin Kiely with Enovation Solutions, in liaison with Academic Registry and IT Services. Thanks also to TCD Library Collection Management and Trevor Peare, former Keeper of Reader Services.



## 8. Extra-Curricular Life and the Research Postgraduate Student

Trinity College is home to a very large number of student societies and other activities dedicated to ensuring that students have not merely an academically fulfilling time in College, but also enjoy themselves! There is, I think, something of a tendency to regard these societies as the possession of undergraduates (such that when one operates at a postgraduate research level – especially, perhaps, at a PhD level – one should be ‘beyond’ such frivolities!). In fact nothing could be further from the case! In the first place these societies and facilities are fully available for graduate students. In the second, given the often very specific fields of study upon which many of you will be working, it is vitally important to maintain other interests! Finally, there is no context in which life within a university is not a ‘learning process’ and a journey of self-discovery, and your extra-curricular activities can be a vital component part of this process.

What follows is a brief introduction to three important contexts in which the ‘non-academic’ interests of Postgraduate Students are enhanced, namely through the work of the **Graduate Students Union**, **Student Societies** and **Trinity Sport**.

### **GRADUATE STUDENTS’ UNION AONTAS NA N-IARCHÉIMITHE**

#### **Sabbatical Officers (2020/21)**

President: Gisèle Scanlon

Vice-President: Abhisweta Bhattacharjee

Trinity’s Graduate Students’ Union (GSU) is the representative body for all postgraduate students in Trinity College Dublin. The two Sabbatical Officers of the GSU work full-time and represent postgraduate students on all major committees including Board, Council, Student Life, Graduate Studies Committee and Research Committee. The Union represents postgraduate students within the university, advocates on behalf of Union members on issues that impact your education internally and nationally; and protects the interests of our members during their studies.

The Union provides social and recreational facilities for postgraduate students, manages the facilities of the 1937 Postgraduate Reading Room in Parliament Square and provides a Graduate Common Room for postgraduate students in House 7. The Union also provides lockers for students in the 1937 Reading Room, with rental organised through the house 6 Front Office.

The GSU President and GSU Vice-president are elected to represent their respective areas separately from one another. Both report independently to the GSU Executive and to GSU Board and at GSU Council. The GSU President works primarily in the area of policy and at GSU strategic initiatives and directly oversees the implementation of the Union’s fiscal and commercial development and annual growth.

The Vice-President is the Welfare and Academic Officer whose focus it is to help postgraduates realise their academic potential and provides confidential one-to-one

advice, advocacy and support with issues like supervisor relationships, academic pressure and financial deprivation. The GSU sends a weekly email of information, postgrad events and updates from the university. This year's sabbatical team will work to ensure that postgraduate students are heard, valued and respected, and endeavour to create a progressive, inclusive, dynamic environment where everyone can participate fully.

The GSU works tirelessly on behalf of our members (you) who comprise of PhDs, Masters students, part-time, full-time, artists, academics, and other professionals drawn from across the world and spread across three faculties of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS), Health Sciences (HS) and Engineering, Maths and Science (EMS), both on and off campus.

There are also many social ways for you to be involved with the GSU; from representing your class as a class rep to attending council meetings where you can improve policy. We host numerous social events throughout the year and we have something for everyone including Halloween Ball, Christmas Commons, pub quizzes, book salons, culture evenings with special quests, an international research conference and we publish two prestigious peer-reviewed journals.

You as postgraduates are our priority! We believe that you bring the brightest minds, vision, energy, enthusiasm, creativity and investment to College. We understand that coming to Trinity is a significant investment in your career and yourself, so we want to ensure that you are heard, valued and respected but we cannot do it alone. We endeavour to ensure that Trinity Graduate Students' Union develops as a progressive, inclusive, engaging, dynamic and democratic safe space for all our members. We need you! Look forward to welcoming you to your GSU family!

Contact info:

GSU Website: [www.tcdgsu.ie](http://www.tcdgsu.ie)

GSU President: [president@tcdgsu.ie](mailto:president@tcdgsu.ie)

GSU Vice-President: [vicepresident@tcdgsu.ie](mailto:vicepresident@tcdgsu.ie)

Office landline: (01) 896 1169

GSU, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, House 6, Front Square,

Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2

Social media:

Twitter: @TrinityGSU

Facebook: @TrinityGSU

Instagram: @tcdgsu

#Puttingpostgradsfirst

## Student Societies in TCD

As you begin your studies or research at Trinity, your initial thoughts may be focussed around the practicalities of this work. However, aside from academics, the campus has a vibrant and diverse society culture, with over 120 active groups in which staff and students alike can participate. The variety of societies on offer means there is truly something for everyone.

If you are interested in pursuing your chosen discipline in a social setting, societies like Werner Chemical, DU History, or Joly Geographical are veritable melting pots. Staff, postgraduates and undergraduates alike, connected to the discipline academically or otherwise, engage in a wide range of discipline-specific talks, debates, trips, quizzes and social events. These societies are numerous, covering almost all disciplines in the College.

If enjoying world class speakers from politics and popular culture, or developing your debating skills is more your thing, Trinity's oldest societies, the Hist and Phil have much to offer.

You can also learn or practice languages with our litany of language and cultural societies, help out at Vincent de Paul's 'Soup Run' or with the Voluntary Tuition Programme. If all of this leaves you in need of some down-time, you can try de-stressing at KnitSoc's celebrated 'Stitch and Bitch', or have a coffee with a book in LitSoc's Attic library. These are just some of the litany of events occurring across campus each week.

The Central Societies Committee (CSC) is the student-led governing body tasked with representing, supporting and funding student societies on campus. You can find out more about all of our societies at our website, [trinitysocieties.ie](http://trinitysocieties.ie), or by picking up a copy of the **Societies Guide**, available around campus. If your chosen interest isn't represented, you can develop your own and present it to the CSC which has the power to grant recognition to new societies fulfilling its criteria.

## How to get involved

A *Freshers' Fair* is held during the undergraduate Freshers' Week in early September. You'll notice societies taking over Front Square as they set up stall to sign-up members for the coming year. Pop down and grab some freebies, learn about the variety of activities on offer, and join your favourites for just a few euro. Once you're a member, you'll receive weekly emails from your chosen societies outlining the events planned for the week ahead. You can also keep in the loop by perusing [trinityevents.ie](http://trinityevents.ie), a fantastic new resource which ensures you're always in the know about student-led activity on campus.

If you miss the opportunity to join up in Freshers' Week, **Fourth Week**, which takes place in said week of Michaelmas Term, is an exciting open-door festival where societies showcase what they have to offer. Grab a copy of the Fourth Week timetable

and pop along to free events open to all: you won't be disappointed, and may even find new interests, hobbies and friends.

Getting involved in societies not only allows you to experience another side of College, but can also teach you many useful skills which are sure to benefit you in your chosen field. What are you waiting for?

### **Trinity Sport**

Trinity Sport is the name for all things sporting within Trinity and we hope to see lots of you pay us a visit during your time here.

The main hub is based in the Sports Centre, at the Westland Row end of campus. The centre comprises gym, swimming pool, virtual spin, functional training zone, wellness room and climbing wall.

The sports centre is also where the majority of our fitness classes – incorporating everything from Box Fit to Boot Camp – take place. Up to 65 classes are delivered in the Sports Centre each week, ensuring all levels of fitness and physical activity are catered for.

All registered postgrads are automatic members of the centre's facilities although there is an additional charge for classes. To get started you just need to activate your student card each September on your first visit to the Sports Centre. As a member, don't forget you can also avail of preferential rates for all sports services, bookings and programmes.

That's not all though because Trinity Sport offers a comprehensive range of other activities – competitive sport, social sport, wellness courses and health initiatives.

Become a student club officer or volunteer and get involved in helping to organise Trinity Sport events or join one of the 50 student sports clubs, which offer activities in everything from fencing to sub-aqua and practically everything in between.

We also run a range of activities for children. Our Bravehearts kids' club runs during mind-term, Easter, summer and Halloween. These multi-sport camps are suitable for those aged 4-15.

The Trinity Sport team takes pride in providing you with the very best university sporting experience. Our dedicated, passionate, expert and friendly team looks forward to welcoming you!

### **Contact details**

Website: [www.tcd.ie/sport](http://www.tcd.ie/sport)

Email: [sport@tcd.ie](mailto:sport@tcd.ie)

Phone: 01 896 1812

Twitter: [@tcdsports](https://twitter.com/tcdsports)

Facebook: Trinity Sport Dublin

**Sports Centre opening hours**

Mon-Thurs: 7am-10.30pm

Mon-Fri: 7am-9.30pm

Sat-Sun: 9am-6pm

**Additional on-campus facilities**

Synthetic tennis courts

Futsal pitch

Natural grass floodlit rugby pitch

Natural grass croquet lawn

Cricket

Outdoor athletics track (April-October)

**Additional off-campus facilities**

Santry Sports Grounds

Iveagh Sports Grounds

Dartry Hall

Islandbridge Boat House

*Michelle Tanner, Head of Sport and Recreation*

**Social Events and the Office of the Dean**

And finally, the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies also seeks to organise social events for *all* Postgraduate Students roughly once a month. We do this because (a) we really are committed to your well-being and want to indicate this fact (b) it is a really beneficial thing for students in one discipline to meet students in another and in a relaxed setting and (c) the Dean needs to get out more.

So for example in the last year we organised a big Christmas party especially aimed at students from abroad who might not be able to make it home for the holidays; we also held a table quiz where the prizes were all won by immunologists; we had a lovely family walk on the beautiful stretch of terrain between Bray and Greystones; finally and most memorably in May 2019 we held the first annual 'Postgrads Got Talent Night' in the Sugar Club in Dublin.

I would love for as many students as possible to come along to these events, and will email you regularly throughout the year with details – and indeed with other relevant information in so far as your study is concerned!

## 9. Support Services for Postgraduate Research Students

In some cases, students come on to the postgraduate research register and, a few years later, complete their research and graduate, with the whole process being a smooth one and the pressures that are faced being 'normal' and bearable! In others, however, the process is a rocky one and students face very significant difficulties – academic, personal, health based, financial and so on. Trinity, rightly, has a reputation for being profoundly interested in the well-being of *all* students and for seeking to assist students in difficulties. There is, of course, a humanitarian underpinning to this (in that we are genuinely interested in the dignity of every single student who comes through our gates). But in addition we believe in you and in the work you are doing – and the more that we can help students to overcome difficulties the more likely it is that they will produce the quality scholarship of which they are capable and which will enhance the scholarship of our academic community!

That being the case there are a range of **supports** available to postgraduate research students. Most of which are free and all operate confidentially. Some are generic to all students whereas others, like the **Postgraduate Advisory Service** are specific to postgraduates. The **Disability Service** provides invaluable support for students with any kind of disability who might need some accommodation in order to ensure that their studies proceed effectively. **Student Learning Development** offer support and training on academic and research skills. **CAPSL** provides many courses which are of huge benefit to graduate students – and especially those working as teaching assistants and demonstrators. The Graduate Studies Office operates a **Travel Grant Scheme** for those students seeking to go abroad for research purposes. Finally the **Careers Advisory Service** provides advice and training in relation to the 'next step' for students. These services, and others, are outlined now.

### Student Services in Trinity College

There are a number of useful services which are available for postgraduate students in Trinity where what might broadly be termed 'personal issues' may represent an impediment to their studies. Trinity seeks, wherever possible to assist with these issues. The following are some of the principal ways in which it does so.

### Student Counselling Services (SCS)

The student counselling service aims to provide a free, compassionate, inclusive and student-centred mental health service, embedding high quality counselling, problem prevention, and online services, in line with the University strategy. The SCS offers workshops on coping with the challenges of university, online self-help programmes, and 1-to-1 & group counselling. Student Counselling is available to all registered students of the university. These services are free, professional, and confidential.

#### Contact Details

**Email:**

student-counselling@tcd.ie

*(appointments cannot be booked by email).*

**Phone:**

(01) 8961407

**Website:**

[www.tcd.ie/student-counselling](http://www.tcd.ie/student-counselling)

**Location:**

3rd floor of 7-9 South  
Leinster Street

### College Health Service

We take a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to Student Health, working closely with the other Student Services, in the knowledge that Health matters can have a significant impact on the Academic progress of students.

The Doctors and Nurses see patients in one-to-one, face-to-face consultations.

Currently, there is no charge for Consultations although a small fee is payable for some additional procedures.

**Phone:**

(01) 896 1591

**Website:**

<https://www.tcd.ie/collegehealth/>

Or Pre- booked appointments are available from:

9.00 - 16.30

and an Emergency (Sit and Wait) clinic is provided twice a day, at 9.30 and 14.00

**Location:**

Trinity Campus in House 47, a residential block adjacent to the rugby pitch.

### Nursery

The TCD Day nursery provides full time care for children aged 3 months up to 4.5 years of age. Children who attend the nursery and meet the criteria as set out by Department of Children and Youth Affairs, are eligible to apply for the following childcare grants:

- The Early Childhood Care and Education programme (ECCE)
- The Community Childcare Subvention programme (CCS)
- The Community Childcare Subvention Plus programme (CCSP)
- The Training and Employment Childcare programme (TEC)
- The Affordable Childcare Scheme (ACS).

Further information on childcare funding can be found on [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)

The Day Nursery can be accessed by staff and students of TCD

The application for the waiting list is available on the Day Nursery webpage. If one parent is a staff member and their partner is a student the application may be placed on the student waiting list but will be charged the staff member rate.

### Contact Details

**Phone:**

(01) 896 2277

**Website:**

<https://www.tcd.ie/about/services/daynursery/>

**Location:**

College Day Nursery  
House No. 49/50  
Trinity College

**Student Learning Development (SLD)**

SLD is available for all registered students. We offer a range of services to help you improve your learning and academic study skills. You can attend workshops on writing skills, time management, procrastination, study skills, critical thinking, thesis writing, presentation skills and many more.

You can have a one-to-one appointment or a drop-in session with a learning advisor to discuss your individual concerns.

Our Blackboard module has extensive learning resources which you can access 24/7. We can also help you if you are not on campus, through Webinars, Skype and email support.

Visit our website for more information on our services, upcoming workshops, how to make an appointment and how to enrol on the Blackboard module:

[www.student-learning.tcd.ie](http://www.student-learning.tcd.ie) or phone us at 01 8961407.

**Contact Details**

**Location:**

7-9 South Leinster Street

**Email:**

[student.learning@tcd.ie](mailto:student.learning@tcd.ie)

**Phone:**

(01) 896 1407

**Website:**

[www.student-learning.tcd.ie](http://www.student-learning.tcd.ie)

**STUDENT 2 STUDENT (S2S)**

If anything is on your mind and you'd like to share it with a good listener then a Peer Supporter would love to help. Peer Supporters are available for any student in the College and are there for anything you might want to talk through with them. You don't need to be in distress or crisis to talk to a Peer Supporter, but they can help with the larger problems as well as the smaller things. Our volunteers are highly trained, confidential and professional, but they're also fellow students who can offer some genuine empathy and a friendly ear. You can email us directly at

[student2student@tcd.ie](mailto:student2student@tcd.ie) or request a one-to-one meet-up with a Peer Supporter by calling 01 896 2438 or filling out an online form at [student2student.tcd.ie/peer-support/PSrequest.php](http://student2student.tcd.ie/peer-support/PSrequest.php)

You can also call into the S2S Office on the 3rd Floor of 7-9 South Leinster Street any Tuesday lunchtime (1-2pm) during the first term to meet directly.

**Phone:**



(01) 896 2438

**Website:**

student2student.tcd.ie

*(to request a one-to-one meet-up with a Peer Supporter)*

**Location:**

3rd floor of 7-9 South Leinster Street, Dublin 2.

**The Postgraduate Advisory Service**

The Postgraduate Advisory Service, commonly referred to as PAS, is the frontline support for postgraduate students at Trinity. PAS is coordinated by the Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Martin McAndrew, who acts as a first point of contact for postgraduate students needing support or guidance.

**How PAS can help**

We are here to provide support on any matter that may impact upon your time as a postgraduate at Trinity.

Some of the most common issues students come to PAS to discuss include: study-related stress or worry; concerns about academic progress; supervisor-relationship concerns; extensions and going off-books; queries regarding regulations and academic appeals; bullying; plagiarism and disciplinary cases and financial hardship.

PAS supports **students by:**

- Providing frontline confidential and free support, information, and referral via the Postgraduate Student Support Officer
- Providing, on referral, named academics to provide advice, advocacy, and assistance via a panel of Postgraduate Advisors
- Providing complementary supports including workshops and training to postgraduates
- Administering the Postgraduate Student Assistance Fund and other financial assistance to postgraduate students.

PAS also provides representation for postgraduates in the event of disciplinary and/or academic appeals

Appointments are available from 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday and can be arranged by emailing [pgsupp@tcd.ie](mailto:pgsupp@tcd.ie)

If in doubt get in touch!

**Financial Assistance**

The Postgraduate Advisory Service administers the Postgraduate Student Assistance Fund.

This fund is intended to tackle disadvantage by providing small amounts of financial assistance to students requiring additional support to enable them to fully benefit from their third-level studies. It is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.

For more information see here:

<https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/financial-assistance/>

**Contact info:**

Phone: +353 896 1417

E-mail: [pgsupp@tcd.ie](mailto:pgsupp@tcd.ie)

Website: <https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/>

## **Disability Service**

The Disability Service provides confidential, professional supports for postgraduate students with disabilities in Trinity and the university is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in education and to ensuring that students with a disability have as complete and equitable access to all facets of College life as can reasonably be provided.

Disabilities can be visible or invisible, but regardless of the nature of yours, the Disability Service is here to help you identify and support your needs during your postgraduate study. These supports are tailored and may differ in form or scope from those at undergraduate level.

Working within the service are a team of professionals with expertise in the field of disability, including disability officers, occupational therapists and an assistive technology officer. As a student registered with the service, a number resources and supports are available to you that will assist you throughout your research and study. Students requiring disability supports at PG research level are required to register for disability supports, see <http://www.tcd.ie/disability/current/registration.php>

After registering for disability support, students will be invited to meet with a member of the Disability Service team (Disability Officer/Occupational Therapist) on a one-to-one basis to discuss additional disability supports. The student decides on the level of support that they require. Disability supports available are linked here <http://www.tcd.ie/disability/current/services-supports.php>

Additionally, postgraduates can avail of individual sessions with an occupational therapist who will assist you to develop practical skills and strategies to help you manage your university student life (including balancing wellbeing, research load, and the supervisor-relationship).

If you have a disability and need additional support in Trinity, please contact the Disability Service by:

Email: [askds@tcd.ie](mailto:askds@tcd.ie)

Phone: 01-8963111

Website: [www.tcd.ie/disability](http://www.tcd.ie/disability)

***Declan Treanor, Disability Service***

### Trinity Trust Travel Grants

For many of you, the process of completing a PhD will not be simply a matter of working in a library or laboratory and producing a document that will only be reviewed by examiners! Rather it will involve travel abroad possibly for fieldwork, or to study in a venue that has particular resonance for your research and, in many cases, it will involve travel to participate in and ideally present at significant international conferences. It goes without saying that this can be a huge driver for and enhancement of your research and the university strongly encourages this.

That being the case, The Graduate Studies Office is able, thanks to the very significant generosity of the Trinity Trust, to operate a Travel Grant scheme for PhD students. Details of how to apply for a travel grant (as well as important regulations in relation to application dates and so on) are available at <https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/students/research/>. Please note that, if you wish to apply for a grant, it is necessary both to obtain a recommendation from your Head of School, and also that the School agrees to fund 20% of the costs of the trip. Please note also, that, whereas the travel grant scheme covers costs such as transport/conference registration and attendance costs, it does not cover subsistence/food etc.

### Careers Supports for Postgraduate Students

During your time as a Trinity postgraduate research student, you'll get the chance to develop skills and attributes that will help you to succeed in your career and prepare you for the workplace of the future. The Careers Service are here to support your development and help prepare you for your career ahead. With employment continuing to grow, there is an increasing demand for graduates with high-level skills so we can help you to articulate the extra skills you have developed through your postgraduate education.

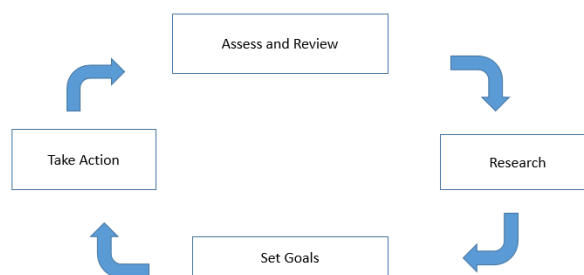
We can also help you to explore your career options and ambitions, both within and outside academia, and help you to plan how to achieve them by

- working with you on CV and interview preparation
- providing one-to-one guidance with experienced careers experts
- working with you through specialist careers workshops on the career planning process
- linking you with companies looking to hire Trinity graduates through our careers fairs and events which we hold throughout the year
- giving you the chance to participate in employability-related activities, and
- making sure you have the right careers information and resources available to you when you need them.

Our online careers system [MyCareer](#) lets you book appointments with us and keeps you up-to-date with careers events and job vacancies. We know what's going on in the labour market and can help you find the opportunities that are there for you.

You can also meet and be inspired by our Trinity alumni, many of whom have gone on to do great things in their careers.

Whether you are completing a taught programme or embarking on a PhD it is never too early to consider the future. The following career management model may help to structure your thinking and the Careers Advisory Service (CAS) can provide specific help at each stage:



**Assess and Review** – At this stage it will be important to think about the skills you have developed, the kind of person that you are and what is important to you. The [Planning Your Career](#) section of the CAS website will help with this activity.

**Research** – Whether you are considering a complete change of career direction, continuing a research career or just changing the way you will use your skills, it will be important to research jobs thoroughly. In addition to looking at CAS [resources](#), don't forget to tap into the knowledge and experience of Trinity [alumni](#).

**Set Goals** – The process of getting a job remains highly competitive but setting goals helps to make it more achievable, particularly if you are considering a total change in direction.

**Take Action** – Register with [MyCareer](#) to make an appointment to discuss your plans with your careers consultant and also to set your job search preferences so that you are only getting notification of relevant activities and events from the Careers Service. Attend CV/LinkedIn clinics to get feedback on your applications. Please read the details on the module [Planning and Managing your Research and your Career](#) (5 ECTS) which is jointly delivered by the Careers Service and Student Learning and Development and that is described earlier in this handbook.

You won't necessarily have to move sequentially from stage to stage. There may be a job you are particularly interested in and it will make sense to go directly from Research to Taking Action. However the more aware you are of your skills, then the easier it becomes to articulate them through your CV/LinkedIn profile and at interview. Most importantly, however, is to stop postponing and to start exploring career options.

Find out more about us at [www.tcd.ie/careers](http://www.tcd.ie/careers), where you'll find a find a specific postgraduate student section.

### *And in Conclusion...*

What then should one be seeking to achieve as a research student in a university like Trinity (apart from simply the degree for which you are registered)? No doubt there are as many answers to this question as there are research students! But some answers to this are contained in the reflections of **Professor Richard Reilly, Professor of Neural Engineering in the School of Engineering** and of Dr Sonja Heppner who, in the spring of 2019, completed her doctoral studies in Trinity.

Carrying out a PhD is about passion, curiosity and commitment. You need to have a passion for the theme of the PhD and be excited by the potential outcomes. This is fundamental. At the initial stages, a PhD can often involve considerable reading trying to understand but also review the research topic. This is why passion and curiosity are so important. Your supervisor may have a number of key articles or publications for you to start reading but then expect you to expand around the topic. As your critical analytical skills improve a series of research questions will emerge about an unexplored or underdeveloped area. These questions are the core of your PhD and around which a set of hypotheses and experiments can be developed. You will refine these questions many times throughout the years of dedicated research. A PhD is all about the research questions.

You need to make a commitment to these research questions in terms of time and energy. The depth of thinking requires a commitment to self-discipline. There will be times when all is clear and going at pace, but equally there will be times when nothing seems to make sense and progress slows. This is where the self-discipline is important: to review the questions again, refine the hypotheses, approach analysis of the experimental results in different ways etc. Also important in terms of commitment is reading of the scientific literature. If there is one universal piece of advice to offer: read more to stay on top of the subject matter! Read as many articles as you can and make notes. All the online reference systems allow you to do this. Reading without synthesising what you are reading is not going to result in making progress. Keep your notes ordered in a specific format, a format that works for you. Some use online notepads but I recommend hardback notebooks (I have filled 100's).

Besides reading and addressing your research questions, you will need to communicate your ideas to others. This will be in the form of weekly lab meetings, journal clubs or research seminars. It may also involve symposia and conferences here in Ireland but also internationally. Being able to articulate your ideas and your thoughts is just as important as defining and addressing the research questions. Being able to present clearly and concisely to a group of peers takes practice. Learn this skill. Similarly, being able to communicate clearly and concisely in written form is also crucial. Writing well still matters in an age of instant communication! There are numerous excellent style guides to scientific writing. Learn this skill also.

Attending symposia and conferences is an excellent way to network with other researchers in your area. They will have similar questions and may even have better answers! Building a network of colleagues working in your area is important not just

to share ideas and concepts but also to provide critique on your work. Join the international society in your topic. The society will typically be hosting the annual international conference. Student membership is often at a reduced rate and sometime can be free. You will receive monthly news and it will keep you up to date on the wider field. Science tends to be a very open and sharing community. You will make friends, many of whom will be friends for life. All labs have webpages, many have blogs and also tweet regularly. Follow them, keep in touch and be part of the community.

As you progress with your research you will notice how quickly the time is passing. You need to keep in your mind some idea of where you are going in your career. What will do you afterwards? Will you be seeking a postdoctoral position in another university, a position in a company or starting your own? Your network of colleagues, and those who you have met at conferences, will be important here to help plan your next position. Follow also the large national and international funding agencies. Who is receiving grant funding? They will often be seeking to hire postdoctoral and other researchers.

Your supervisor is there to advise and provide mentorship. They will know your research interests, get to know your skills and talents and help shape your future career thoughts. They will also be able to offer advice, support and restore confidence when things get confusing (which invariably happens at some time or another for most students).

Carrying out a PhD is about passion, curiosity and commitment. Together with depth of thinking and excellent communication skills you will make an impact in your topic. Do the work and learn some lifelong skills.

Carrying out a PhD is also a luxury. You may not often have the time to dedicate to one defined topic in your career. So make this one count and enjoy it.

### **Professor Richard Reilly**

A caveat at the beginning: I already knew and loved Trinity when I started my PhD. I had been here as an Erasmus student during my undergrad and had completed a master's here too. My highs are thus shaped in many ways by my familiarity with Trinity and by feeling at home on this campus, from the very start. I am saying this to perhaps explain why I didn't experience any teething problems at the start of my PhD. I already knew where everything is. I already knew most members of my School. I already had my favourite spots on campus. My favourite computer room – the one on the top floor of the GMB. My favourite part of the sports centre – the swimming pool, though I'd recommend rowing, spinning classes and the climbing wall too. My favourite tree – the cherry tree in the rose garden. My favourite tour – the annual Tree Walk on campus. My favourite on campus activities – lounging on the edges of the cricket pitch in the sunshine, strolling by a rugby match on campus, working long hours, often at night, reading old books in the Early Printed Books

Reading Room. All of that and more I had already done before I embarked on my journey that was to become my PhD. Still, I learned many new things during my PhD, had new experiences, good and bad, that shaped who I am today.

Would I do it all over again? In a heartbeat.

## **The Highlights**

- **Seeing the Long Room of the Old Library at Night**

I once forgot my umbrella at an event in the Long Room of the Old Library. I went back that same evening to ask if I could retrieve it and, lucky me, a security guard opened the already locked doors upon me knocking and led me to the Long Room. It was dark outside. The only light that was guiding our steps was the light from his flashlight illuminating the marble busts as we walked along – a magical sight. We found my umbrella to my delight. It was such a small act of kindness but one that represents all that is good about Trinity for me. Small acts of kindness make my day, always.

- **My Time in the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts & Humanities Research Institute**

I was a Graduate Fellow in this wonderful institute for three years, only interrupted by a five-month stay in Geneva in between. Being a Graduate Fellow meant that I had a desk on the fourth floor of this beautiful building. It meant that I could overlook Front Square whenever I wanted, work whenever I felt like it (the building is accessible to its members 24/7) and, most importantly, it meant that I became a member of the caring Hub family – which includes its staff members, PGR research students, post-docs and visiting fellows. The TLRH is such a brilliant institution, drawing people and ideas from the following nine partner Schools: Creative Arts; Education; English; Histories and Humanities; Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies; Law; Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences; Religion; and the discipline of Philosophy. Being a Graduate Fellow at the TLRH allowed me to meet fellow PGR students from this wide range of disciplines, friends I would have not met otherwise. Such fun. When alone in the Hub at night, I even sometimes practiced cartwheels. For me, having this haven of support made all the difference. There was always someone in the Hub to listen, to offer feedback and support.

- **My Conference Trips – to Belfast, Canada, Dunboyne and Leicester**

Granted, I did not rock my presentation in Leicester. But with the feedback I received in Leicester, my presentation at McMaster University in Ontario was much improved. The latter was my favourite conference of all because it drew its presenters from the disciplines of philosophy and law, a combination that challenged me in all the good ways. I am a fan of cross-disciplinary conferences now and would recommend them to anyone who is interested in broadening their horizon, in talking to people unfamiliar with their own research topic, in hearing about topics completely outside

of one's own intellectual comfort zone. It's refreshing and a great test for the *viva voce*, having to answer unexpected questions, from persons with a different academic background. In general, the ideas included in my thesis were refined at these and other conferences and seminars, with participants generously offering insightful comments and suggestions for the improvement of my thesis. Conferences are a great opportunity for practising inter-personal skills too. The way in which one reacts to feedback matters and can be practised. Patience, wit and kindness are good places to start, as are curiosity and generosity.

- **My Junior Visiting Fellowship at the Graduate Institute in Geneva**

The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva is a world-renowned institution for the study of international dispute settlement – my cup of tea. Whilst there, I received illuminating feedback from its members, one of them would later become the external examiner of my thesis. Being affiliated with the Graduate Institute also gave me access to the well-equipped Library of the United Nations Office. My favourite reading room there was the one for Legal and Political Questions, overlooking Lake Geneva. It was there that I studied the constitutions of the world– hard copies of them, to my utter delight and joy. I also found joy in observing the peacocks that are strolling about the grounds of the United Nations, most of the time around the area of the Library. I had organised that Junior Visiting Fellowship myself, with the support from my supervisor. Despite all the successes I associate with my time in Geneva, it was also a difficult time. I did not have any friends in Geneva when I arrived and I found it difficult to make new ones. It was the most isolating experience during my PhD, a productive but lonely time. It did not help that Geneva was prohibitively expensive.

- **My Relationship with my Supervisor**

My supervisor was always, and still is, extremely thorough and incredibly quick when revising my work. I am deeply grateful for her kind, generous and highly constructive support – both academically and beyond the law. I am also grateful for her guidance and for her invaluable comments on countless drafts of my thesis. Without her eye for detail, for what constitutes a proper argument, including its structure and logic, and the so important big picture, my thesis would lack much rigour. I felt both free and guided in my research which was a wonderful combination. Indeed, I appreciate all the support I received throughout my PhD, not only from my supervisor but from the School of Law as a body and its members. The academic community in the School of Law was critical for my research. I found invaluable discussants on my research topic within my School and among my classmates, without whom my thesis would not shine as bright. None of this means that every day was Pancake Tuesday during my PhD. There were times when I struggled. But I always felt supported, and that feeling of support only increased my respect and love for this fine institution. Being allowed to call my supervisor anytime in a time of need, even at weekends (which I don't think I ever did), or once receiving a phone call from the then Head of School, from abroad, just to make sure I was fine, worked wonders. Their support meant a lot to me.



- **My Work as a Seminar Tutor and Guest Lecturer**

In Hilary Term 2015/16, it was my responsibility to lead seminars for undergraduate students on the topic of Legislation and Statutory Regulation. The students were so bubbly and bright, so enthusiastic and creative that it was a joy to interact with them in class. In retrospect, receiving unexpected questions from inquisitive students about academic topics only loosely related to the topics of seminars, was also a great preparation for the *viva voce*. Yet, most importantly, discussions in these seminars were simply great fun. I completed a CAPSL Teaching and Supporting Learning Module while teaching these seminars. CAPSL stands for **Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning**. In that module, I learned how to organise student group work and discussions, how to write a lesson plan, how to formulate my teaching philosophy, how to interact with (difficult) students, how to be fair but firm. It is a very worthwhile module I'd recommend to anyone. The most helpful aspect of the module involved a peer sitting in on a seminar and offering me feedback on my teaching. Giving guest lectures on my research topic – investment arbitration – was a rewarding experience too, as was any time I had a chance to talk about my research.

- **Funding and Publications**

I received **funding** from the Irish Research Council, a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship. I also received financial support from the School of Law, Trinity College Dublin, and the Trinity Travel Trust. Both contributed towards the costs of some of my research and conference travels. Winning the Rory Brady Essay Competition for Excellence in International Conflict Management three times during my PhD must also be counted as among the highs. The essay prize is sponsored by the American Arbitration Association and is awarded annually to the Trinity College Dublin student who is deemed to have made an outstanding contribution to the study of dispute resolution. I highly recommend participating in writing competitions. It is such great practice for writing articles. Several **publications** resulted from my research to date, three journal articles and a blog post.

### **Tips**

Talk to people. Befriend people. Engage. Join societies and sports clubs. Try something new. Everyone in Trinity is there to help you. Be friendly to the security guards, the librarians, the shopkeepers, to the person sitting next to you in the library or on the cricket pitch in the sunshine. Smile. It will make all the difference. That book you were so desperately trying to find. A librarian will look for it – until s/he finds it or declares it lost and orders a new one (perhaps not every time but more often than not, always when the budget allows it). That hello you will receive from a security guard or a shopkeeper on campus will make you feel welcome, home. Show respect and passion and much respect will be given to you in return.

Trinity is a diverse community of wonderful people all doing their best to learn, understand, shape, create, be kind. Be kind to others. Be kind to yourself. Not every day will be a great day. Some days will be productive. Others less so. Some days, you will feel euphoric – the day of submission, the day of your viva, the day of your graduation, all those days before then, when the ideas and words flow onto the pages of your thesis. Some days, you might feel lost. That is ok. Truly everyone does at some point. I did. In my second year, I spent months on end on research that was not vital to my thesis and had to be cut, though I still snuck what I had learned during that time into a paragraph of my thesis (or perhaps just a footnote) in the very end. It all will be just fine. It will be better than fine. Learn to let go. That presentation that didn't go so well. See it as a learning opportunity. Next time, you will be better prepared, and it will all go better. Or the time after that, and it will feel just great. Practice presentations as often as you can – in research seminars, at conferences, at coffee mornings, in your schools, in front of your peers, in front of the mirror, at thesis-in-three events, in elevators, with tourists on campus. I actually did all of that and it made my thesis much better than it would have been otherwise. Expect the unexpected. That tourist you are telling everything about your research could actually be an expert in your area on his holidays.

Go explore. There might be modules on offer in Trinity College Dublin you would like to audit. Approach the lecturers and ask them. A semester or an academic year abroad? That conference in Mongolia? Go for it. There may even be academic exchanges on offer from your school that you could avail of, if interested. Exchanges can be such an enriching experience. First, you'd get to meet others in your field. Second, you'd get to see the world. Third, there is really nothing quite like it – expanding your network of friends and collaborators who will cheer for you from across the world in times of celebration and in times of need will make your time as a researcher a much happier one. Apply for grants, within Trinity College Dublin and beyond. Ask for help if and when you need it, as often as you need it. Approach whomever you trust, if there is an issue – other students, your supervisor, other professors, administrative staff, the Head of your School, the Dean of Graduate Studies, anyone truly, as long as you say something. Stand up for yourself.

Apply for a desk, in a designated office space for PGR students such as the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts & Humanities Research Institute or in the library. Your school might offer designated desk space for PGR students too, or it might hold desks in other areas of campus. Find that out. You may also want to rent a locker in the Postgraduate Reading Room from the Graduate Students Union. It truly doesn't hurt to have some surplus space for all those books you will eventually read, and if you don't read them, then they must have not been that important in the first place, and they are well stored. If you use the gym all the time (you really should – the pool is fantastic), you can get yourself a locker there too. Use the sports centre. Contribute. You have always wanted to take part in a ping pong pub quiz? Organise one now. (\*At a ping pong pub quiz, participants have to answer questions while playing ping pong, sometimes while carrying one of their team members on their back. It sounds bizarre but was one the funnest things I have ever done in Dublin.) You have always wanted to share your love for the sound of frogs at night-time, organise a field trip. You love reading *de Bello*

*Gallico* in Latin? Tell others about it and soon you will have a reading group going. There is nothing you cannot do during your time in Trinity. The sky is your limit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonja Heppner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

In 2019, Dr Sonja Heppner, LLM (Dubl.), completed her PhD at the School of Law, Trinity College Dublin, where her research focused on the application of the principle of open justice to the system of investment treaty arbitration. Her awards include a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship and the Rory Brady Prize for Excellence in International Conflict Management 2014, 2017, 2018 and 2019. In 2019/20, she will be co-teaching the LLM module on International Dispute Resolution at Trinity College Dublin.