

A Note on This Handbook

This handbook applies to postgraduate research students in the School of Engineering. It provides MAI (by research), MSc (by research) and PhD students a guide to what is expected of you on your programme, and the academic and personal support available to you. Please retain it for future reference.

The handbook is intended to complement the regulations and information found in the College Calendar (Part III) which governs all academic activity in Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin. Please familiarize yourself with both the College Calendar and this handbook so that you are fully aware of all information relevant to you and the rules and regulations that apply to your programme of study. The College Calendar may be consulted on the TCD web (www.tcd.ie/calendar) or in the Berkeley library.

The information provided in this handbook is accurate at time of preparation. Any necessary revisions will be notified to students by email. Please note that, in the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the College Calendar and information contained in this handbook, the provisions of the Calendar will prevail.

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1. Contact information

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Connect Centre				
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General College Contacts				
Postgraduate Advisory	Mr Martin John McAndrew			
Service (PAS)	e: pgsupp@tcd.ie			
	p: +353 1 896 1417			
	I: House 27			
Academic Registry:				
Research courses	e: research.admissions@tcd.ie			
	p: +353 1 896 2968			
Thesis submission	e: gsothese@tcd.ie			
	p: +353 1 896 8718			
Student cases	e: pgcases@tcd.ie			
Website	https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/			
Student Finance:				
Deputy Supervisor	Ms Caitriona Ni Chochlain			
	e: nichoclc@tcd.ie			
	p: +353 1 896 1082			
Website	http://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/fees-payments/			
HR	Ms Rachel McNamara			
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	I: House 4			
Student Records	e: academic.registry@tcd.ie			
	p: +353 1 896 4500			
	I: Watts Building			

Student Counselling	e: student-counselling@tcd.ie
	p: +353 1 896 1407
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	http://www.tcd.ie/Student Counselling/
Graduate Student's Union	https://www.tcdsu.org/
	l: 2 nd floor, House 6

2. Admission and registration

2.1 Admission

Applications for admission as a Research Student are made through the <u>online</u> <u>application system</u>. All applications must identify a proposed supervisor and provide a short research project proposal. Successful applications must be accepted by the proposed supervisor, Head of Discipline, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Within approximately six weeks of their first registration as a research student, each student should prepare an initial research plan jointly with their Supervisor. This plan should normally be based on the research proposal submitted upon application and set out the project objectives, research methods and facilities to be used, and the main tasks to be completed. It should be approximately two pages in length and copies should be retained by both student and supervisor.

As per the College regulations, entry is normally onto the PhD register on a probationary basis and students are required to undergo a formal review process within 18 months of registration in order to continue on the PhD register (extended to 30 months for part-time students). Students who enter on the MSc register but who wish to transfer to the PhD register go through a similar transfer process. Further details are provided in the Confirmation/Transfer section below.

2.2 Registration

A student record is created from the moment a student is admitted to the College and is maintained during their academic career while in College.

New and continuing TCD students will be sent an email inviting them to complete the online registration process annually via the my.tcd.ie web portal.

Prior to registering, consult the <u>registration guide</u> on the <u>Academic Registry's</u> website.

Your fees must be paid before registration can be completed. Please send the funding details and fees invoice to Daniel Wearen for payment.

3. Supervision

A student's Supervisor shall provide advice and assistance that shall include, in particular, reference to the College regulations and matters relating to academic progression and examination. The Supervisor shall provide advice and guidance on sources of funding and introduce the student to others in their Department and research group.

The Supervisor shall also give the students all possible assistance regarding access to the material, equipment and other resources essential to their research and in developing a feasible research plan that will lead to a thesis of acceptable standard.

Complaints about the adequacy of supervision should normally be made first to the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate). In line with College regulations, complaints about the adequacy of supervision will not be accepted once a thesis has been presented for examination.

It is a research student's responsibility to keep their supervisor fully informed about the progress of their research, including any difficulties or delays they experience. The communication of information about ongoing research in this manner is an important element of an engineering research student's education and training. Research students must inform their Supervisor as soon as is practicable if they are incapacitated by illness or other grave cause and unable to undertake their agreed research programme.

Alternative advice

If a research student is experiencing difficulties which need to be discussed confidentially, in addition to the Supervisor as support, the Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning in the School can provide confidential advice on academic and pastoral matters. Alternatively, the Postgraduate Advisory Service (in House no 27) and the Graduate Student's Union (House no 6) are also available to advise postgraduates in difficulty. All of these services are offered in strict confidence.

4. Doctoral Committee

In line with international best practice of supervising and advising researchers, College and the School of Engineering have adopted the policy of forming individual doctoral committees for each individual research student in the School.

The committee should consist of the supervisor, co-supervisor (if any) and two independent academic members (not necessarily from the School). One of the two independent members will act as the Chair of the committee. In addition to reviewing and monitoring the progress of the student, the committee also has the role of mentoring the student and providing pastoral care and support if necessary. The independent members are normally expected to attend and participate in the final vivavoce examination of the student. That participation will take the form of acting as chair or internal examiner. The supervisor (and co-supervisor if any) may attend the final vivavoce examination.

The committee should meet at least once a year to approve the student's progression. Progression meetings in years 1 and 3 are particularly important, as a confirmation meeting is held in year 2. The report for progression can either be submitted separately to the committee for approval or the committee can also recommend progression on the confirmation report and examination.

Doctoral Committee guidelines are available here.

5. Programme requirements

5.1 Modules

As all PhD programmes in the School of Engineering are structured, students are required to undertake taught modules to support their research and postgraduate education. Modules worth a minimum of 10 ECTS or equivalent must be completed by each student. A separate document listing the <u>allowable level 9 modules</u> in College is available on the School website and will be sent to all new PhD students by e-mail at the beginning of the academic year. If a module not on this list is proposed to be taken, the prior approval of the Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning should be sought, having first received the approval of your supervisor.

MSc research students and part-time MAI students are exempt from this requirement, but should consult with their supervisors on how the completion of modules could support their particular research project.

The modules to be completed should be selected by each student in consultation with their supervisor, taking into account their individual circumstances and requirements in light of their prior qualifications and their research project. The modules selected may enhance the candidate's breadth and depth in their area, strengthen their research and research-related skills, or provide other expertise that may enhance their potential career opportunities. These modules may be

- Discipline specific, i.e. related to the student's field of research
- Generic engineering, i.e. supporting a wide range of engineering research
- Broad curriculum, i.e. intended to expand a student's learning experience

The modules can be completed in any appropriate setting, including the School of Engineering, elsewhere in College, or at another University or Institute in Ireland e.g. a Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA) or Structured PhD Program (SPP) partner, or elsewhere. Wherever possible PhD students should endeavour to complete PhD level (Level 10) modules, but it is recognised that these are not available in all subject areas.

Students are advised to complete their modules within 12 months of admission to College as a postgraduate research student. All research students must complete their modules prior to submission of their thesis. MSc students wishing to transfer to the PhD register must have completed or be completing 10 ECTS of modules. PhD students should normally complete their modules prior to confirmation on the PhD register (see below). Exceptionally for scheduling or other reasons, PhD students may complete some of their modules following the confirmation stage, but in this case the modules and a date for their completion must be set out in the student's confirmation report.

Students participating in certain thematically structured PhD programs (SPPs) may need to complete additional requirements, set out in each case by the Director of the SPP. These requirements must be additional to and compatible with the general College regulations and Engineering School requirements set out in this handbook.

Module information

Further information on available modules may be found in but is not limited to the following:

Tangent, Trinity's Ideas Workspace: https://www.tcd.ie/tangent/education/postgraduate/

MSc Bioengineering:

https://www.tcd.ie/biomedicalengineering/education/msc/current-students-/

MSc Civil Engineering:

http://www.tcd.ie/civileng/programmes/postgraduate/msc/

MPhil Music and Media Technology: http://www.tcd.ie/eleceng/mmt/

MSc in Electronic Information Engineering:

https://www.tcd.ie/eleceng/teaching/postgraduate/electronic-information-engineering/

MSc in Mechanical Engineering:

https://www.tcd.ie/mecheng/postgraduate/mscbymodule/

Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics:

https://www.scss.tcd.ie/postgraduate/pgcertstats/

5.2 Confirmation / transfer process

A stringent process of academic assessment for all PhD students to confirm their continuation on the PhD register must be arranged within 18 months of registering on the programme (extended by a further year for part-time PhD students). This assessment represents an important part of a student's postgraduate education. It provides a formal opportunity for a review of the research project by an independent expert whose external considered view is normally of much value in planning the remainder of the project.

It is the responsibility of the supervisors to email on behalf of the student the course administrator, Daniel Wearen (wearend@tcd.ie) the confirmation report and along with the completed confirmation form. The form is available on the Graduate Studies website at this link.

The confirmation form must be submitted by the end of a student's second year (and by the end of the third year for part-time students). Failure to submit the confirmation form will prevent a student from registering for the next academic year.

The PhD confirmation process requires the student to prepare a PhD *Confirmation Report*; this report should provide sufficient information on the context, objectives, progress and planning of the project to allow an assessment to be made of whether the student should continue to work towards the completion of a PhD thesis. The student's supervisor will provide guidance to the student on the contents and preparation of the report, and advise the student of the standard required. Guidelines for the contents of the report are provided below, but as each PhD thesis represents a unique original research work, no single form of report is universally applicable. In the review document submitted, evidence of having obtained the necessary ECTS credits must be provided (or

that participation in such courses is in progress), otherwise confirmation cannot be granted.

The student shall be invited to attend a PhD confirmation interview with the Doctoral Committee to discuss their confirmation report and plans for completion. The Doctoral Committee will consist of the supervisor, co-supervisor (if any) and two independent academic members (not necessarily from the School). One of the two independent members will act as the Chair of the Committee. Feedback shall be given to the student as soon as possible after the interview. The panel shall recommend one of the following: (a) continuation on the PhD register, (b) continuation on the PhD register after some minor changes have been made to the PhD confirmation report, (c) continuation on the PhD register subject to the completion of identified modules within a specified time period, (d) continuation on the PhD not recommended at this time: a new report to be written and confirmation interview to be held again as soon as possible thereafter, (e) a recommendation to change to the general Masters register to submit a Masters thesis, or (f) not to continue as a postgraduate research student. A student may appeal the result of a PhD confirmation interview.

A transfer process shall be completed to decide on the eligibility of students on the MSc register who wish to be transferred to the PhD register. This process is similar to the PhD confirmation process outlined above and shall normally be completed within the first 24 months of registration.

Confirmation report guidelines

School of Engineering confirmation report guidelines are available <u>here</u>.

5.3 Annual progress reports

All PhD students are required to complete an annual progress report at the end of year 1 and year 3 (if not submitting the thesis at that time). If a fifth year is needed, for which permission is required of the Head of School, then an annual report is also required at the end of year 4. MSc students must complete an annual progress report at the end of year 1 if continuing on to year 2. The Supervisor also has to complete his/her section of this report. A progress report template for 2025/26 entrants onwards can be downloaded here and the template for pre 2019/20 entrants can be downloaded here. Progress reports should be submitted to Daniel Wearen at wearend@tcd.ie in the School Office by 30th June for the September registrants or by 30th January for the March registrants. Failure to submit a progress report will prevent a student registering for the next academic year.

5.4 Thesis submission

The maximum periods before submission of a thesis by research students on the full-time MSc and PhD registers are two and four years respectively. An extension of the period within which the thesis can be presented may be obtained by application to the Dean of Graduate Studies by the student's Supervisor and must have a strong recommendation from the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) and the approval of the Head of School.

The submission of a thesis is at the discretion of the candidate. A candidate is advised, but not required, to seek the agreement of his/her Supervisor prior to submission. The essential requirements of Masters and PhD theses are set out in the Calendar.

Research students must submit an <u>Intention to Submit</u> form at least one month prior to submission to the Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning, copying ethesis@tcd.ie.

When the Intention to Submit form has been received, the student is set up with a folder in SharePoint and sent a link to upload a Pdf of their thesis, along with a Pdf of the abstract to this folder. The student is also requested to complete the Thesis Submission form which is accessed through this same folder in SharePoint.

5.5 Examination

Following thesis submission, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in consultation with the Supervisor will nominate an external examiner and an internal examiner to independently examine the thesis. A *viva voce* examination is a requirement of the examination of a PhD candidate. For a Masters examination a *viva voce* will be arranged at the request of either examiner or the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate). The internal examiner has overall responsibility for organising the *viva voce* examination, supported by the student's supervisor and the School administration. The *viva voce* will be chaired by a senior academic nominated by the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate). The Supervisor may be present at the *viva voce* examination purely as an observer unless the student wishes otherwise. The Supervisor may record decisions on changes to the thesis on the interviewee's behalf.

In the case of a Masters degree the examiners may propose that

- (i) the degree be awarded for the thesis as it stands;
- (ii) the degree be awarded for the thesis subject to minor corrections;
- (iii) the thesis be referred for major revision and subsequent re-examination; or

(iv) the thesis be failed.

When examiners propose either failure or referral of an MSc thesis for major revision, they must hold a *viva voce* examination.

In the case of a PhD thesis the examiners may propose that

- (i) the degree be awarded for the thesis as it stands;
- (ii) the degree be awarded for the thesis subject to minor corrections;
- (iii) the thesis be referred for major revision and subsequent re-examination, for which six months are normally allowed from the time of notification,
- (iv) a lower degree be awarded, if necessary following minor corrections to the thesis, or
- (v) the thesis be failed.

For MSc and PhD theses, minor corrections should be completed within two months of the candidate being informed of corrections required by the Graduate Studies Office. The supervisor should advise the candidate in addressing the matters raised prior to re-submission of the thesis. The internal examiner will confirm that corrections have been carried out satisfactorily and inform the Graduate Studies Office. Major revision of the thesis should be completed within six months of notification. A re-examination of the revised thesis is required, but a second *viva voce* examination will not be held.

A student may appeal the decision of the examiners.

6. Graduation

All degrees are publicly conferred under the student's registered name by the Chancellor, or a Pro-Chancellor, at the ceremony known as Commencements. Commencements are meetings of the Senate of Dublin University for the conferring of degrees; the ceremonies are conducted in Latin recalling the oldest traditions of European universities.

Commencements are organised by the Academic Registry and take place in the Public Theatre in Front Square. Students are required to complete a Notice of Candidature form and submit it to the Academic Registry (graduation@tcd.ie) by the specified closing date set out in Commencement Schedule. See:

https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/graduation/apply-to-attend/

Conditional application may be made in advance of the publication of final degree results, but must be confirmed fourteen days prior to the beginning of the relevant commencement session.

7. Plagiarism

In the academic world, the principal currency is *ideas*. As a consequence, you can see that *plagiarism* – i.e. passing off other people's ideas as your own– *is tantamount to theft*. It is important to be aware the plagiarism can occur knowingly or unknowingly, and the offence is in the action not the intent.

Plagiarism is a serious offence within College and the College's policy on plagiarism is set out in a central online repository hosted by the Library which is located at https://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-policies/academic-integrity/. This repository contains information on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, the College Calendar entry on plagiarism and a matrix explaining the different levels of plagiarism outlined in the Calendar entry and the sanctions applied.

Undergraduate and postgraduate new entrants and existing students, are required to complete the online tutorial 'Ready, Steady, Write'. Linked to this requirement, all cover sheets which students must complete when submitting assessed work, must contain the following declaration:

I have read and I understand the plagiarism provisions in the General Regulations of the University Calendar for the current year, found at: http://www.tcd.ie/calendar

I have also completed the Online Tutorial on avoiding plagiarism 'Ready, Steady, Write', located at https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity/ready-steady-write#s-lg-box-16121080

Plagiarism detection software such as "Turnitin" and Blackboard's "SafeAssign" may be used to assist in automatic plagiarism detection. Students are encouraged to assess their own work for plagiarism prior to submission using this or other software.

8. Research ethics

All researchers are required to conduct their research to the highest ethical standards and each individual researcher is responsible for ensuring good ethical practice. The School of Engineering Research Ethics Committee (REC) has been set up to assist and provide guidance in this process. Please visit our <u>Research Ethics section</u> for information on when ethical approval is required and how to apply.

College's policy on good research practice is available <u>here</u>.

9. Information on academic resources

9.1 Library

Trinity College Library is the largest library in Ireland and one of the largest in the world. Its collections of manuscripts and printed books have been built up since the end of the sixteenth century. In addition to the purchases and donations of almost four centuries, since 1801 the Library has had the right to claim all British and Irish publications under the terms of successive Copyright Acts. The bookstock is now over six million volumes and there are extensive collections of manuscripts, maps and music.

The most important section of the Library for Engineering students is located in the Hamilton Building. In addition, postgraduate students have access to the 1937 Reading Room, which is reserved for their use and is equipped with computers.

Higher degree postgraduate students may borrow 10 books for one month from the open shelves and closed access areas. They may also borrow, for one week, 4 books from the undergraduate lending collection if no other copies are available.

Subject Librarians are the key links between Trinity's academic activities and the Library and the subject librarian for Engineering is David MacNaughton (david.macnaughton@tcd.ie).

9.2 IT Services

IT Services is responsible for the provision and support of computer systems, networking, and audio-visual services in College. The central point of contact for all services is the IT Services Helpdesk. To report a problem or seek advice, students can send an email to itservicedesk@tcd.ie, phone the Helpdesk at (01) 896 2000 or call in person to the ground floor of Áras an Phiarsaigh.

Information about IT facilities in College (for example, how to get started with a TCD email account, using the printing system and how to save work in College Computer Rooms) is available on the IT Services website: www.tcd.ie/itservices

9.3 Group study facilities

Locations

Berkeley Library

Location: Basement Area

Booking: In person at the Library Service Counter

Hamilton Library

Location: Lower Level, adjacent to Photocopying Room Booking: In person at the Library Service Counter

John Stearne Medical Library

Location: To right of library entrance

Booking: In person, by telephone (8962109) or e-mail (<u>stearne@tcd.ie</u>) Three rooms are available - Room 2 is equipped with Assistive Technology PC, and priority will be given to those registered with the Disability Service.

A booking folder is kept at the relevant Library Service Counter. To make a booking, one signature and ID number is required. Bookings are in one-hour slots; maximum of two hours may be booked at a time. However, a group may extend their booking if the room is still free after their session.

10. Student support services

10.1 Careers Support

The TCD Careers Advisory Service (CAS) is available to students (www.tcd.ie/careers). Included in the many services provided by CAS are an extensive Careers Information Centre and an award-winning website. Both contain information on all aspects of the career-planning process, employment search, as well as details of ongoing career and graduate recruitment events, and job vacancies.

10.2 Graduate Students' Union

Situated on the second floor of House Six, the Graduate Students' Union (GSU) is an independent body within College that represents postgraduate students throughout College. Upon registration, all postgraduate students automatically become members. The GSU has two full-time sabbatical officers, the President and the Vice President, who together manage the operation of the Union. See the GSU website for more information: https://www.tcdsu.org/

The GSU Common Room is located in Front Square, on the first floor of House 7. It is equipped with a kitchen area, and stocked with tea and coffee, as well as a "take a book, leave a book" library. All registered postgrads are entitled to purchase a key which is available from the Students' Union Front Office on the ground

floor of House 6. The key is €40 and is yours for the entirety of your time at Trinity.

10.3 Student Counselling Service

The Student Counselling website (http://www.tcd.ie/Student Counselling) provides information on the support options available to students who are experiencing either personal and/or academic/study concerns. The services are free and confidential to registered Trinity College students.

10.4 TCD Health Service

The TCD Health Service aims to take a holistic approach to Student Health and in addition to providing on campus, primary health care for students it focuses on the psychological and occupational aspects of student health and health education. Student consultations are free of charge with modest charges for additional services. The Health Service website (www.tcd.ie/College Health) provides facts and information about the healthcare facilities available on campus, as well as information on staying healthy at Trinity.

10.5 Disabilities Service

The Disability Service aims to provide appropriate advice, support and information to help students with disabilities. Students who require assistance for a disability or specific learning difficulty, should register with the Disability Service (www.tcd.ie/disability). The service is located in Room 2054, Arts Building . Students will then be assigned a Disability Officer who will work with them to assess the level of support required.

10.6 Student Societies

The Central Societies Committee (CSC) is the body responsible for student societies in Trinity College. There are currently 98 societies in College, covering a huge variety of interests. Students interested in joining a society can do so during Freshers Week or throughout the year by emailing them — email addresses for all societies are available on the CSC website: http://trinitysocieties.ie/. An online event guide is also available on the CSC website.

10.7 Postgraduate Advisory Service

The Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS) is a confidential service available to all registered postgraduate students at Trinity College. It offers a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral, and professional supports dedicated to enhancing your student experience. The Service is led by the Postgraduate Support Officer who provides frontline support for all Postgraduate students in Trinity. The Postgrad Support Officer will act as your first point of contact and a source of support and guidance regardless of what stage of your Postgrad you're at. In addition each Faculty has three members of Academic staff appointed as

Postgraduate Advisors who you can be referred to by the Postgrad Support Officer for extra assistance if needed. Contact details of the Postgrad Support Officer and the Advisory Panel are available on the PAS website: http://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/

The PAS is located on the second floor of House 27 and is open from 8.30 – 4.30, Monday to Friday. Appointments are available from 9am to 4pm. Phone: 8961417; Email: pgsupp@tcd.ie.

11. General information

11.1 Data protection

Trinity College Dublin uses personal data relating to students for a variety of purposes. We are careful to comply with our obligations under data protection laws. The following link provides information on how we obtain, use and disclose student data in the course of performing University functions and services.

https://www.tcd.ie/info_compliance/data-protection/student-data/

11.2 COVID-19

Further to the guidelines as set out by the Vice Provost we note that due to the ongoing presence of COVID-19, it is important to follow familiar guidelines relating to hand hygiene, wearing of face masks. This is part of your individual responsibility for managing symptoms or illness of any kind. Mask wearing is not mandatory but we strongly recommend students wearing masks in lecture settings, libraries and other venues where people may be in close quarters. We know this mitigation is effective in limiting transmission.

We also encourage staying away from class for 7 days if you test positive. We will support you during this period by offering online resources as usual where practical. We will make best efforts to enable online streaming of lectures where facilitated in College lecture theatres. This may not always be possible because of the nature of the lecture/tutorial or laboratory material. Specific resources that can be made available to students in such situations will likely differ across modules and learning situations and your module coordinators will make this clear as we go through the semester.

11.3 Teaching Assistant Opportunities

At the start of each semester a spreadsheet highlighting teaching assistant (TA) opportunities in the School will be circulated. These are paid opportunities. If students are interested in being a TA in the School's UG programmes this spreadsheet can help to identify courses that require TAs. More information on the School's UG courses can be here

https://www.tcd.ie/Engineering/undergraduate/

There are links in the spreadsheet to the modules where details of the module coordinator can be found. Please contact them directly if you are interested in providing teaching assistance for their module or to find out more information about what it entails.