



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

**School of Religion, Theology, and
Peace Studies
Postgraduate Research
Handbook 2025–2026**

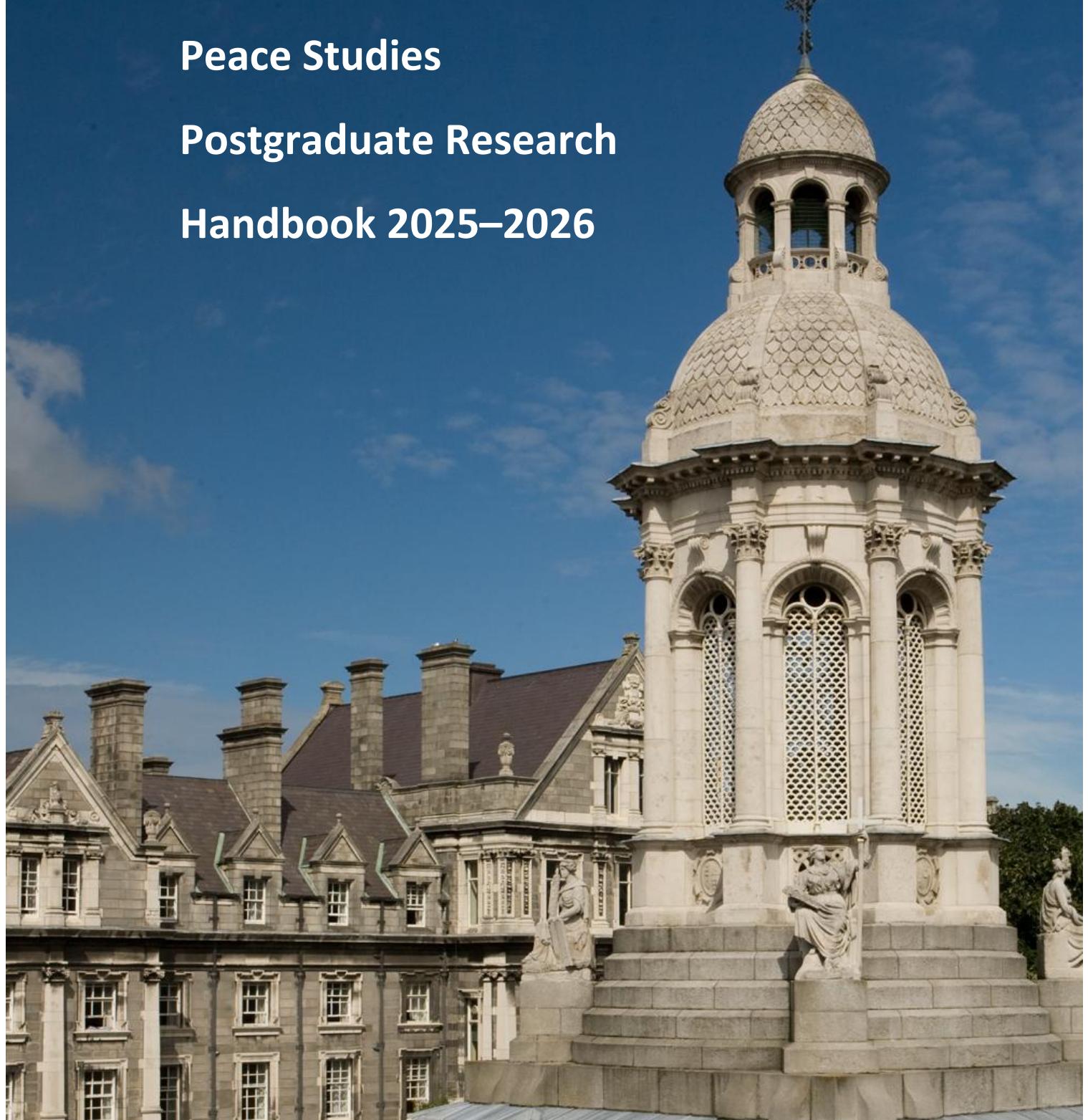


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M.LITT. AND PH.D. RESEARCH

SCHOOL OF RELIGION, THEOLOGY, AND PEACE STUDIES

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Graduate Studies in the [School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies](#) where we continue a tradition of scholarship that goes back to the very foundation of Trinity College Dublin.

The School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies is one of the twelve Schools that comprise Trinity College's Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. It brings together biblical studies, theology, ethics, theory of religion, and international conflict and peace studies as independent but related disciplinary fields.

The School's undergraduate and postgraduate courses explore encounters between religions and cultures from their roots in antiquity to the present day. They investigate the intellectual and institutional resources developed in historical and current interactions and conflicts and apply them to the challenges and opportunities societies face in an age of globalisation.

The School has a strong commitment to community engagement, has campuses in Belfast and Dublin and is home to the [Loyola Institute](#), the [Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies](#) and the [Irish School of Ecumenics](#).

The School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies holds an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Athena Swan Ireland supports higher education institutions in impactful and sustainable gender equality work. Bronze award holders are recognised for their in-depth self-assessment focused on gender equality, commitment to their resultant action plan and capacity to follow through with these plans to bring about change.

The Handbook

This Handbook summarizes and supplements the regulations that are contained in the University Calendar and will be required for reference throughout the programme. However, in the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the [General Regulations](#), PART III, published in the University Calendar and information contained in programme or local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations in the Calendar will prevail.

Academic and administrative staff will be available at Orientation to explain most of these requirements, and to answer any queries that you may have about procedures and regulations.

An electronic copy of this Handbook will be available on the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies website - on the [Current Student](#) page.

The following link will also be helpful re the [College Virtual Learning Environment](#) (VLE) with guides and support for [Blackboard Ultra](#) and related learning technologies.

A hard copy of this handbook in large print is also available in the School Postgraduate Administration office. Alternative formats of the Handbook can be provided on request.

There may be some modifications during the year to the procedures and regulations outlined below; these will be brought to your attention as they arise.

Please note:

Familiarize yourself with College's regulations for postgraduate students. These are available in the [Calendar, Part III](#).

Your @tcd.ie email account is the **only** e-mail address used for official College business. Consult this email account regularly.

Your personal data is kept in accordance with the [Student Data Policy](#).

College regulations require that you remain resident in the Republic of Ireland, or in Northern Ireland, during the course of your studies. Absence for a substantial period in either of the teaching terms is not permitted. Research abroad is permitted only with the approval of your Course Coordinator.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. SCHOOL OF RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND PEACE STUDIES - CONTACTS AND OPENING HOURS

Head of School – Prof. Gillian Wylie

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Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate, Michaelmas Term: Prof. Jude Lal

Fernando

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School Manager – Mr. Martin Humphreys

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Postgraduate Officer – Mrs. Amanda Antunes

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+353 (0)1 896 4772

Belfast

Senior Executive Officer – Caroline Clarke

cclarke4@tcd.ie

Tel: +44(0)28 9077 0087 (mornings)

Librarian – Brid O'Brien

brid.obrien@tcd.ie

+44(0)28 9037 3980

For the full list of all academic and administrative staff please visit the [School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies website.](#)

2. Opening Hours

School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies building: Access will be via swipe card only and will be restricted to normal office hours i.e., standard 9AM – 5PM. Monday to Friday. The School will remain open on evenings Mon-Thurs until 9.30 p.m. to accommodate the delivery of the School's Dublin based Evening Postgraduate courses. Any changes to the opening and closing times will be notified by e-mail.

Please note students are not permitted to remain in the building outside normal office hours without permission unless attending a lecture, seminar or event which has been scheduled by a staff member. Students who wish to avail of working in the School outside of Office Hours must request permission from lecturer or relevant staff member.

In Belfast opening hours are normally 9.00am – 5.00pm. You will be notified of any changes to this via your student email account. Access is via a card which will be issued at the start of term. There is a PhD room with a small number of desks, and the cost of Associate Membership at QUB library is covered by the School.

3. Key Locations

MLitt and PhD students in the School are mostly based in the main Trinity Campus and at the SRTPS campus in Belfast. Further facilities information will be provided at orientation.

[View our location and get driving/walking directions.](#)

[Interactive College Map](#)

[School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies](#)

[Trinity Central](#)

[School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies, Belfast](#)

4. Postgraduate Research Desks

There are study spaces for Ph.D. students in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in Phoenix House on South Leinster Street. Our School receives a quota of these desks every year. The Postgraduate Administrator will contact students each September in relation to the allocation of these desks. Phoenix House is located here <https://www.tcd.ie/Maps/map.php?b=255>.

Each academic year the School is also asked to nominate students for an Early Career Researcher Residency in the Long Room Hub. This includes desk space in the Long Room Hub and a commitment to involvement in the intellectual life of the Hub. Students will be informed by the DTLPG when expressions of interest are sought annually.

<https://www.tcd.ie/trinitylongroomhub/research/fellows/graduate-fellows.php>

Other study places for PGR students include the postgraduate reading room in the ISE/Loyola Building, carrels in the Eavan Boland Library and the [1937 Reading Room](#) in Front Square.

5. Graduation

Following the viva voce, the University's decision to award a degree must be processed and ratified at different committee levels, and you should not expect to be commenced (graduate) within less than two months of a decision.

All queries about your Commencement, following the Court of Examiners, must be addressed to the [Academic Registry](#). The Academic Registry will email students and contact them through their student portal, inviting you to register for Graduation. Please adhere to the acceptance deadline outlined in the email and respond before this date.

Please note you may not graduate until all outstanding fees and charges (including library charges) have been paid.

6. Feedback

Much of this Handbook is taken up with rules and procedural requirements. This is unavoidable if we are to ensure that the School's courses are well-structured and that the degree you obtain is of real value. But the experience of postgraduate study should be richer than the mere passing of assessment requirements and the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies encourages you to participate in our continuing efforts to improve our procedures as the year advances and to make an evaluation of your experience at the end.

Your suggestions on every aspect of the programme will be invited throughout the year. At the end of each semester, you will be asked to complete an assessment of each of the modules that you have undertaken. The information that you supply is invaluable to staff in the further development of the School. You may also be asked to take part in an online survey conducted by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Please note that in any official survey you will remain anonymous, and your assessment of your experience in the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies – whether positive, negative or both – is fed into a structured assessment of teaching and learning. Of course, you do not have to wait for these formal assessments to take place: staff are available at regular office hours (communicated at the start of the year) and they welcome your concerns and suggestions. Your class will also elect a class representative, who will be able to articulate your concerns through the appropriate channels.

7. Student Supports Services

There are a range of services to turn to for advice and support should you need it at any stage of your studies. The main services are outlined below, and you will receive more information on how they can support you at orientation. Visit the [Student Support Services website](#) and the latest [Student Services Handbook](#) – available on the ['Current Student'](#) page of the School website, for a full list of services.

Belfast students can find further information on how to access Student Support Services as well as a Healthcare factsheet on the [Belfast Campus Orientation Pack](#).

8. Trinity Careers Service

As a Trinity student you have access to information, support and guidance from the professional team of Careers Consultants throughout your time at Trinity and for a year after you graduate. The support offered includes individual career guidance appointments, CV and LinkedIn profile clinics, practice interviews and mentoring.

Visit <https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/> for career, further study, and job search advice. Sign into MyCareer to book appointments, find information about vacancies and bursaries, and book your place on upcoming employer events.

Follow the service on Instagram for career news and advice [@trinity.careers.service](#).

Students may also wish to avail of the following online resources:

[Trinity Careers Service](#).

[Overview of careers resources for postgraduate taught students](#)

[Plan Your Career](#)

[Trinity LinkedIn Alumni Tool](#)

[IT Services](#)

[Library](#)

9. Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, **please dial Security Services on extension 1999.**

Security Services provide a 24-hour service to the College community, 365 days a year. They are the liaison to the Fire, Garda and Ambulance services and all staff and students are advised to always telephone extension 1999 (+353 1 896 1999) in case of an emergency. Should you require any emergency or rescue services on campus, you must contact Security Services. This includes chemical spills, personal injury or first aid assistance.

It is recommended that all students save at least one emergency contact in their phone under ICE (In Case of Emergency).

Belfast students will be provided with separate emergency information at orientation. It is recommended that all students save at least one emergency contact in their phone under ICE (In Case of Emergency).

10. Trinity Inclusive Curriculum

The School is committed to providing an inclusive environment where diversity is valued, and all persons are treated with respect and equality.

We aim to build and support the foundations of an inclusive and enabling learning environment and a fair and supportive workplace where all individuals can thrive. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee has a particular responsibility to support this activity, however the whole School community is engaged in this work of building this culture of respect and inclusion. The EDI Committee's work can be seen here <https://www.tcd.ie/religion/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/> and we welcome student involvement in our work.

The School is committed to embedding inclusivity in all our curricula and in our resources for teaching and learning. Supported by the College's EDI Unit, we are currently focused on two important and interconnected aspects of an inclusive curriculum: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Decolonising the Curriculum.

See details here. <https://www.tcd.ie/religion/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/inclusive-curriculum/>

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) focuses on ensuring that inclusion is a core principle of module design, delivery and teaching practices. Our aim with UDL is to ensure that our programmes are designed to meet the diverse learning needs of students. More details on UDL are available [here](#).

Decolonising the Curriculum

Academics in the School are also engaged in a process of Decolonising the Curriculum. This is focused on recognising, challenging and dismantling the eurocentric, western, colonial and patriarchal power structures that shape academic disciplines. It involves:

- (i) examining the multiple ways that systemic inequalities, eurocentric worldviews and colonial legacies shape knowledge creation and dissemination in our disciplines;
- (ii) challenging the dominance of these systems by interrogating their power and impact;
- (iii) creating space for indigenous, non-western, and marginalised knowledge systems in our conceptualisation of the parameters of our disciplines, our curricula, bibliographies and assessments.
- (iv) reconstructing knowledge through partnership and inclusive practices. This is an ongoing, iterative process that involves all programmes and modules.

For more details on our School project, visit the [Equality website.](#)

Further information on College approaches to the inclusive curriculum are available at this [link](#).

10.1 Athena SWAN Gender Charter

The School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies holds an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Athena Swan Ireland supports higher education institutions in impactful and sustainable gender equality work. Bronze award holders are recognised for their in-depth self-assessment focused on gender equality, commitment to their resultant action plan and capacity to follow through with these plans to bring about change.

Statement of Inclusivity

Trinity College, the University of Dublin aims to provide an inclusive environment which



promotes equality, and values diversity. The College is committed to maintaining an environment of dignity and respect where all staff and students can develop to their full potential. The concept of equality is central to the College's ethos of academic and service excellence. The School of

Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies strives to be an inclusive learning community,

respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age or sexual orientation.

Pronouns, Gender Identity and Gender Expression

Our School affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on a class roster, please let the teaching staff know. Feel free to correct us on your gender pronoun if you feel comfortable doing so. College is formally committed to recognise and support an individual's gender identity and gender expression so that all members of the College community may experience a positive and inclusive environment, where every member is treated with dignity and respect. You can find that formal commitment in [Gender - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#)

Reference/Source:

[Library Guides – Academic Integrity](#)

[Coversheet Declaration](#)

COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

1. Masters by Research (M.Litt.)

A student registered for the degree of M.Litt. is required to carry out research in literature, language, philosophy, history, politics, economics, social sciences, psychology, education, geography, or other cognate branch of learning. The minimum period of research before which a thesis can be submitted is one year from the date of registration, and the maximum period two years. In the case of part-time registration, the minimum period of research before a thesis can be submitted is two years from the date of registration and the maximum period three years. A thesis submitted for an M.Litt. degree must show evidence of rigor and discrimination, appreciation of the relationship of the subject to a wider field of knowledge and make some contribution to knowledge/scholarship (but it is not necessary that it be worthy of publication); it must be clear, concise, well written and orderly and must be a candidate's own work. The Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in consultation with the Supervisor nominates an external examiner and an internal examiner to the Dean of Graduate Studies (a standard nomination form is issued by the Graduate Studies Office). A viva is not held as a matter of course for an M.Litt., unless at the request of the examiners or the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate).

2. Ph.D.

According to the TCD College Calendar, a person who gains a Ph.D. will demonstrate:

- a systematic comprehension of a field of study and mastery of the skills and research methods associated with that field;
- that they have the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of scholarly research with integrity rigour and discrimination, which may involve the development of new skills, techniques, tools or methods;
- that they are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;

- that they have made a significant contribution through original research which extends the frontiers of knowledge by producing a body of work some of which deserves publication in national and international refereed journals;
- that they can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and society in general about their areas of expertise in a sustained and exact manner;
- that they can be expected to be able to promote, with due regard to ethical considerations, within academic contexts, scientific, technological, social or cultural advancement.

A Ph.D. within the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies will correspond to these criteria. As we are a School within the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the hallmarks of a Ph.D. are likely to be the mastery of a field, critical analysis of ideas and concepts, effective engagement with empirical and/or philosophical, theological, or hermeneutical research methods, rigorous argument, and originality.

The PhD dissertation length is 80,000 to 100,000 words.

Ph.D. PROGRAMME DETAILS

1. *Admission*

Details of admission criteria can be found in the College [Calendar, Part III](#). Candidates are normally required to possess a good honours degree (2.1 or 1st) or equivalent. Candidates with appropriate qualifications are normally admitted by the Dean of Graduate Studies directly to year 1 of the Ph.D. register on the recommendation of the applicant's potential supervisor and the School's Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate. It is also possible for candidates to be admitted, on academic grounds, to the M.Litt. register in year 1 with a view to transferring to the Ph.D. register within 18 months (procedures for this transfer are outlined below, see 3.5). Prior to submitting a formal application, students are advised to discuss their research proposal with a relevant member of academic staff. Such a person can be approached directly, or the Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate will be happy to advise you on whom to contact.

An M.Litt. or Ph.D. proposal should be approximately 1500 words long incorporating:

- A statement of the research question/hypothesis
- A description of the proposed research and its relationship to existing research in the field
- A note on research methodology and ethical considerations
- A preliminary structured bibliography
- A work plan

The application, proposal and supporting documentation should be submitted electronically through the Trinity applications portal. An academic committee within the departments takes decisions on the admissibility of applicants and the allocation of supervision. Most often successful candidates will be admitted straight on to the Ph.D. register, although in some cases an initial admission to the M.Litt. register will be suggested. Possible transfer to the Ph.D. register will be decided after 18 months at a transfer viva voce examination (see 3.5 below). After the decision to admit an applicant is taken, students will be informed via their [mytcd.ie portal](#). Successful applicants then inform the Dean of Graduate Studies as to

whether or not they intend to accept the offer. It should be noted that the Dean of Graduate Studies has the final decision on Ph.D. and M.Litt. admission.

2. Attendance and Residency

Normally, all graduate students should enter into residence in or near Dublin, or in the case of the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies, in Belfast. In exceptional circumstances the Dean of Graduate Studies, after consultation with the graduate student's Supervisor and/or appropriate Course Co-ordinators/Directors, may permit a graduate student to undertake a significant portion of the work for their degree or postgraduate diploma outside Dublin. Remote supervision is an arrangement which is granted in extraordinary circumstances on the particular academic merit of the proposed research project requiring the students to be in residence outside of Dublin/ Belfast for more than 50% of their time on register. There must be an academic requirement, as opposed to a preference, to undertake the research abroad. For more information, please see Trinity's [policy on remote supervision of research students.](#)

3. Induction and Orientation

All students must register annually (in September or March corresponding to the month of first registration). Full information on registration procedures will be sent by Trinity. In September and March, the School hosts orientation sessions to welcome all incoming graduate students. This provides students with an opportunity to meet with staff and other research students. Further details will be provided by the School. Induction sessions are offered in the library on the main Trinity campus. See the [library website](#) for details. Postgraduate research students are represented on the School's Executive and Postgraduate Committees. A student representative will be elected to serve on behalf of the PGR community early each academic year.

4. Supervision

College regulations concerning the role of supervisors and the provision of supervision can be found in the College [Calendar Part III](#) (see section 2).

Students are assigned a principal supervisor from within the staff of the School. In some cases, co-supervision will be arranged involving a second member of the School's staff. It is possible for a co-supervisor to be appointed from another School within Trinity, although the member of staff within the School will be the principal supervisor. Students are expected to arrange to meet with their supervisors regularly to discuss research plans, conduct needs analyses, gain feedback on work in progress and devise a timetable for completion. At the end of each supervision session the supervisor writes a short report on the meeting which is agreed and co-signed by the student. Copies for the records are kept by the supervisor, student, and postgraduate administrator. Once a year the student and supervisor should submit a progress report to the Graduate Studies Office. The template for this report can be found at [Postgraduate Research Students](#) section of the Graduate Studies website.

A good resource for students and supervisors about what is expected in supervision and how to maintain good supervisory relationships can be found on the Graduate Studies website at Research Student Supervision session.

Some texts which may be of use to you in planning and executing your research include: Gina Wisker, *The Ph.D. Handbook*, second edition, Palgrave Study Guides, London, 2001, 2008.

Patrick Dunleavy, *Authoring a Ph.D.*, Palgrave-Macmillan, London, 2003.

Kate L. Turabian, *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, seventh edition, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007.

John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, second edition, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, 2007.

5. Thesis Committees

All Ph.D. students entering the university are required to have a thesis committee. This committee comprises two members who are not the students' supervisor(s). They can be members of academic staff from the School but can also include others from College and/or external experts. The role of the Thesis Committee is to monitor and advise in relation to the progress of the Ph.D. student throughout the lifespan of his or her structured Ph.D.

The progress of graduate students will be reviewed each year. In the first, third and subsequent years of a student's period on the Ph.D. register, the student and their supervisor should complete a progress/annual report, accessed under 'Forms' on this page: [Research Student Progression](#).

Before the end of the relevant academic year, the student should submit the progress report to the non-supervisor members of his or her thesis committee. Thereafter, a meeting should be arranged between the student and such non-supervisor members to discuss academic progress. Following this meeting and, if appropriate, following discussions between the supervisory and non-supervisory members of the thesis committee, the latter should sign the progress report form and indicate whether or not they recommend continuation on the register.

6. Research Seminars and Meet-Ups

The School will hold research seminars which are intended to help research students develop their work through peer review, academic discussion and research skills development. Specific details about research seminars will be made available to students in due course. Research seminars in other venues across College may also be of interest to research students, see the links below:

[Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute](#)

[Trinity Research in Social Sciences \(TRiSS\)](#)

Graduate Students interested in gaining experience of teaching by giving occasional lectures to undergraduate students should speak with their supervisor about opportunities. There are some opportunities to work as Teaching Assistants on undergraduate elective modules offered by the School. If such opportunities arise, all PhD students will be notified and invited to apply to the module coordinators.

The Director of Teaching and Learning, Postgraduate, holds regular informal seminars and meet ups to help PhDs integrate and socialise, as well as answering any questions about the PhD process.

7. Structured Ph.D. and Credit Bearing Modules

Trinity Ph.D. students are required to take modules bearing a minimum of 10 and maximum of 30 ECTS over the course of their studies. Students on the non-resident programme are expected to take 20 ECTS. Modules appropriate to a student's field of study, research skills or career development should be identified by the student in consultation with their supervisor. These might be modules taken for assessment which are offered at M.Phil. level within the School or modules offered elsewhere in the University.

There is a wide array of options available to fulfil the taught components of the structured PhD. All of these options are identified on the Graduate Studies website on [Structured PhD Modules](#).

Some particular modules aimed at developing generic skills are listed below and more details can be found in the [Trinity Postgraduate Research Student Handbook](#)
Research Integrity and Impact in an Era of Open Scholarship (compulsory for all Ph.D. students)

This is a mandatory online module available on blackboard - A7000-202223 Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era. It is worth 5 ECTS.

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.

Planning and Managing your Research and your Career

This innovative 5-credit ECTS module to equip Ph.D. students with the skills necessary to successfully plan and manage 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 Ph.D. students from across the College to share your experiences and strategies. It is worth 5 ECTS.

Teaching and Supporting Learning as a Graduate Teaching Assistant

Academic Practice offers several workshops and resources to support PG Teaching Assistants, including a module (5 ECTS) which exposes postgraduates to the educational discourses on teaching and learning at university level. Visit the [Academic Practice website](#) for more information.

8. Tangent: Trinity's Ideas Workspace

Tangent, Trinity's Ideas Workspace offers a range of postgraduate education and certificate options in, Creative Thinking, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship.

Whether you're a researcher, aspiring entrepreneur or jobseeker, our postgraduate programmes are designed to develop the core competencies of collaboration, communication, leadership invaluable to any future career.

For postgraduate education options at [Tangent](#).

9. Trinity Trust Travel Grants

Ph.D. research can require travel abroad for fieldwork, or to study in a venue that has particular resonance for your research or to participate in international conferences. The Graduate Studies Office is able, thanks to the very significant generosity of the Trinity Trust, to operate a Travel Grant scheme for Ph.D. 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 on the [Graduated Studies website](#).

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.

PROGRESSION

1. Probation, Progress and Continuation on the Ph.D. register

As outlined in the College Calendar, continuing registration is dependent upon satisfactory progress. The Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate is responsible for ensuring through annual consultation with supervisors that students are progressing satisfactorily according to the required standard and norms of their particular degree. Not later than 18 months after first registration, students on the Ph.D. register are required to undertake an internal confirmation meeting within the School to confirm their position on the Ph.D. register. Students wishing to transfer from the M.Litt. to the Ph.D. register must also undertake a transfer meeting.

For those on the PhD register, the non-supervisory members of the student's thesis committee serve as the readers for the confirmation meeting. For those aiming to transfer from MLitt to PhD, the DTLPG has the role of appointing reader(s). The student's supervisor(s) may attend as an observer.

Confirmation Meeting Report: The student must submit a completed section of the Confirmation Meeting Report, also filled in by the committee members. The DTLPG sends this report to the Research Progression office. The student must also prepare a written submission for the viva incorporating at least one chapter from the thesis and an overview of the thesis as a whole (including the proposed chapter structure). At the meeting the student presents her or his work to the panel and is questioned on it. If the candidate's work is judged to meet the criteria for a Ph.D. described above (point 2) the DTLPG submits a form to GSO requesting the student's confirmation on the register. If unsuccessful, a student is (1) given the opportunity to resubmit work to the panel (2) advised to submit a thesis for an M.Litt. or (3) advised not to continue postgraduate study. Students wishing to appeal the outcome of the meeting may do so using the Appeals process outlined below (4.6).

The Confirmation Report template can be found here under "Forms":

<https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/current-students/postgraduate-research-students/assessment-and-progression/>

1.1 Probation, Progression and Continuation Deadlines

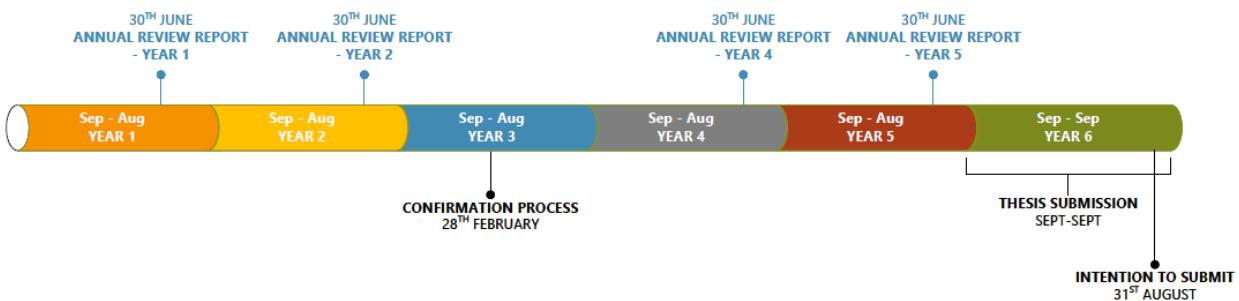
The deadlines for PhD students are outlined below. For M.Litt. timelines, please contact the PG Administrator. **Full Time PhD, September Start**

- Y1 – Progress Report – 30th June (hard deadline)
- Y2 (@18 months) – Confirmation Viva 28th February
- Y3 - Progress Report – 30th June (hard deadline)
- Y4 – Full 12-month year- Intention to submit deadline 31st August



Part Time PhD, September Start

- Y1 – Progress Report – 30th June (hard deadline)
- Y2 – Progress Report – 30th June (hard deadline)
- Y3 – Confirmation Meeting 28th February
- Y4 – Progress Report – 30th June (hard deadline)
- Y5 - Progress Report – 30th June (hard deadline)
- Y6 – Full 12-month year- Intention to submit deadline 31st August



Fulltime PhD, March Start

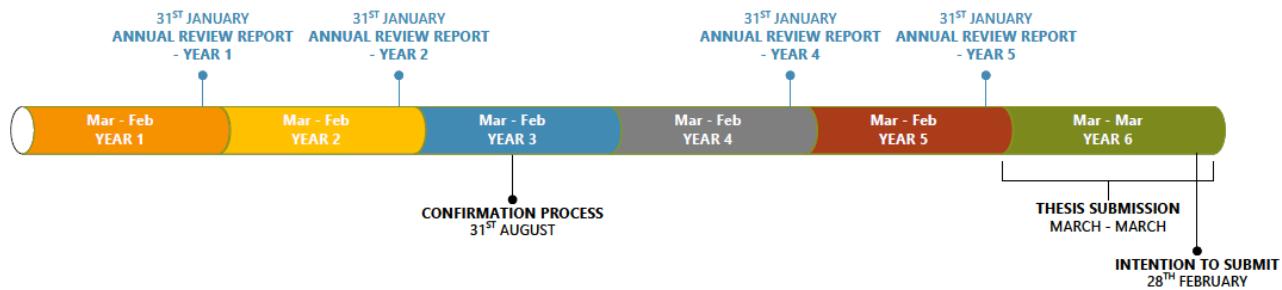
- Y1 – Progress Report – 31st January (hard deadline)
- Y2 (@18 months) – Confirmation Viva 31st August
- Y3 - Progress Report – 31st January (hard deadline)
- Y4 – Full 12-month year- Intention to submit deadline 28th February



Part Time PhD, March Start

- Y1 – Progress Report – 31st January (hard deadline)
- Y2 – Progress Report – 31st January (hard deadline)

- Y3 – Confirmation Meeting 31st August
- Y4 – Progress Report – 31st January (hard deadline)
- Y5 - Progress Report – 31st January (hard deadline)
- Y6 – Full 12-month year- Intention to submit deadline 28th February



2. Requests for Extensions

The College Calendar outlines the extenuating circumstances in which a student's supervisor can apply to the Dean of Graduate Studies for an extension on a student's behalf. See the College [Calendar, Part III](#) under section II – Attendance, Part-time Registration, Extensions and Off Books). Full-time doctoral students should aim to complete their studies within 4 years and M.Litt. students within 2 years. Part-time students within 6 years. Six months prior to the end of the final year the student should liaise with their supervisor about a timetable for completion. The School's DTLPG should be kept informed as to the intended timetable for completion.

3. Procedure for Examination and Submission of Thesis

Procedures governing the submission and examination of dissertations are found in the College [Calendar, Part III](#) see under Section II – Procedure for Examination of a Candidate. One month before submission of their thesis, students should complete the '[Intention to Submit](#)' form and send to ethesis@tcd.ie. Submission will be by electronic format through a link provided by EThesis.

The thesis produced by a Ph.D. candidate is wholly their own work, which they are prepared to defend in all integrity. Therefore, submission of a thesis is done entirely at the discretion of the student. The GSO sends a form for the nomination of external and internal examiners to the DTLPG. It is possible for this form to be completed in advance of submission or on submission. The DTLPG liaises with the student's supervisor to nominate the examiners. The nominations are then sent to the Dean for approval. The viva is normally held within 8 weeks of the receipt of the thesis by the examiners. The Chair for the viva is the DTLPG or her/his nominee. Supervisor(s) may attend as observers.

During the viva students have the opportunity to present their work to the examiners before taking questions. The examiners will then come to a decision.

The possible outcomes of a Ph.D. viva are recommendations for:

- award of the degree of Ph.D.
- award of the degree subject to minor revisions
- referral for major revisions
- award of a lower degree
- fail

An M.Litt. is also examined by an external and internal examiner. A viva is not held as a matter of course, unless at the request of the examiners or the DTLPG.

If the degree is awarded subject to minor revisions, the student will have two months to revise the thesis and the internal examiner must sign off for the Dean of Graduate Studies that the revisions have been implemented. If the thesis is referred for major revisions, the student will have at least six months to revise. They must pay a revision fee and the thesis will be re-examined by the external and internal examiner. There is no second viva voce.

Postgraduate Research Appeals processes are described at 4.6 below.

After successful examination of a thesis is completed, students will be notified by the Dean of Graduate Studies that their name will be brought before TCD Council for noting and they

will be asked to submit the final copy of the thesis and upload it to the TCD electronic repository (TARA <http://www.tara.tcd.ie/>)

4. Research Ethics

The School's research community takes great care to ensure that our research activities follow best ethical practice in their design, content and conduct. Staff and students are required to follow College policies and maintain appropriate ethical standards in their research, and especially in any research involving human subjects. Visit [Research Ethics](#) on the School website for details of procedures, approval checklists, forms and deadlines. To review the College's full "Policy on Good Research Practice", follow this [link](#).

Staff and students are required to follow College policies, maintain appropriate ethical standards in their research, and adhere to current data protection policies such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The School's [Checklist](#) may aid you in determining the level of Research Ethics oversight appropriate to your project. If you answer 'yes' to *any* of the questions, then your application falls into the category of moderate to high risk and requires Level 2 clearance; you must apply for Ethical Approval from the Art, Humanities and Social Sciences [Faculty Research Ethics Committee](#). If you do not answer 'yes' to any of these questions, then you may apply to the School's Research Ethics Committee to either secure Level 1 clearance or approval to proceed with your project.

Although the Research Ethics Committees meet regularly to consider applications for research ethics clearance, if you think you will need clearance the sooner that you submit your proposal the better.

References/Sources:

[Research Ethics](#)

[Policy on Good Research Practice](#)

[GDPR](#)

5. Plagiarism

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. It is commonly accepted also, however, that we build on the work and ideas of others in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the work or ideas of others as one's own, without due acknowledgement. Plagiarism can arise from deliberate actions and also through careless thinking and/or methodology. The offence lies not in the attitude or intention of the perpetrator, but in the action and in its consequences. It is the responsibility of the author of any work to ensure that he/she does not commit plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered to be academically fraudulent, and an offence against academic integrity that is subject to the disciplinary procedures of the University.

To ensure that you have a clear understanding of what plagiarism is, how Trinity deals with cases of plagiarism, and how to avoid it, you will find a repository of information on the [library website](#).

Please:

- i. Visit the [online resources](#) to inform yourself about how Trinity deals with plagiarism and how you can avoid it. You should also familiarize yourself with the 2025-26
- ii. [Calendar, Part III](#) entry on [plagiarism](#) located on this website and the sanctions which are applied.
- iii. Complete the 'Ready Steady Write' online tutorial on plagiarism (available on the online resources link above). **Completing the tutorial is compulsory for all students.**
- iv. Familiarise yourself with the [declaration](#) that you will be asked to sign when submitting course work and which is included on the essay cover sheet, available on the [Current Student](#) page (Student Form) of the School website.

Contact your supervisor or thesis committee if you are unsure about any aspect of plagiarism.

References / Sources:

[Calendar, Part III, General Regulations & Information, Section I 'Plagiarism'](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Library Guides - Avoiding Plagiarism](#)

[Plagiarism Declaration](#)

6. The Use and Referencing of Generative AI

Aligned with the [College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research](#) (2025), the use of GenAI is permitted unless otherwise stated. Where the output of GenAI is used to inform a student's document or work output, this usage should be acknowledged and appropriately cited, as per [Library guidelines on acknowledging and reference GenAI](#). From an academic integrity perspective, if a student generates content from a GenAI tool and submits it as his/her/their own work, it is considered plagiarism, which is defined as academic misconduct in accordance with College Academic Integrity Policy.

Beyond limited legitimate uses of generative AI, **presenting the output of generative AI tools as your own work, without acknowledgement, violates the principles of academic integrity and is academic misconduct**. In other words, you cannot use AI tools to generate all or part of the content for an exam or assignment and submit it as if it was your own work.

This implies that **undisclosed and/or inappropriate use of generative AI tools may violate the principles of academic integrity**. Accordingly, the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies requires a declaration of generative AI use to be completed and submitted with all work (exams, assignments). This declaration is made in addition to the standard declaration of academic integrity as part of a revised assessment cover page (see below). Any assignment submitted without the declaration will not be marked. Such assignments will be returned to the student and must be resubmitted with the cover page, potentially resulting in a delayed mark.

This policy recognises that generative AI tools may have some legitimate uses to support your learning and to help you to research for or to polish an assignment. For example, you might use generative AI to summarise your notes in preparation for an exam or assignment, to perform some initial research into a topic (bearing in mind the limitations noted above), or to polish your own writing in terms of grammar or spelling or to make it more concise. All such uses must be declared. No credit/marks will be awarded for use of generative AI, nor are students expected to use generative AI for any purpose. You should also reflect on whether relying on such tools to do this work for you will reduce opportunities for you to develop and hone your own academic skills.

Where generative AI tools have been used to generate content, they must be clearly cited and full details of how the content was generated must be declared in an appendix. There is a helpful and detailed description of how to cite ChatGPT (which can be applied to other generative AI tools) from the Chicago Manual of Style [here](#).

You should assume this policy applies to all assessments/exams in the School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies but please note that individual module coordinators may supplement this policy with further restrictions or permissions regarding generative AI use. Please check the module assessment information on Blackboard for that module, and if in doubt, please email the module coordinator.

As part of the declaration, students are asked to select either (A) or (B), below.

(A) Nothing to declare. I did not use generative AI software as part of the work for this assessment.

(B) I used generative AI as part of the work for this assessment.

Where (B) is selected, students are required to include an appendix containing a <350-word explanation of how generative AI was used (which tool (name, version, publisher, url); how the output was generated; how this output was used in the assignment) and how that use conforms with the principles of academic integrity. Questions and/or prompts and the

generative AI output should be included as part of the appendix. These are not included in the word count for the assignment. Where these are not included, **they may be requested as part of the marking process.**

Further Information

Generative AI tools are a family of tools that incorporate natural language processing and deep learning techniques to generate answers (text, code, images etc.) to questions and prompts. The purpose of this policy is to outline how students' use of generative AI fits into our expectations regarding academic integrity.

It is first important to be aware that there are a number of serious concerns about generative AI tools and there are significant limitations to the outputs they produce. These include (please see links for further information):

- *Accuracy of the information produced.* Generative AI tools work by predicting the next most likely word in a sequence. This means that the tools are susceptible to so-called "hallucination" – producing text that is grammatically correct and which may have face validity but is not factually correct.
- *Plagiarism and lack of source attribution.* The sources of information relied upon to construct the text produced may not be appropriately acknowledged and, where sources are provided, the references may be fabricated.
- *Ethical issues related to data sourcing.* Many generative AI models were trained on materials obtained from the internet and include text, images, code etc., that were proprietary, copyright-protected, or protected by non-commercial commons licenses. Using generative AI output risks these forms of plagiarism and copyright infringement.
- *Breach of TCD copyright.* If university module materials (e.g., slides, syllabus) are used to prompt or to guide the response of AI tools, this is a breach of TCD copyright and is illegal (see <https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/assets/pdf/Intellectual-Property-Policy-2022.pdf>).
- *Bias.* As part of training, the models that underlie generative AI were exposed to data obtained from the internet, which may be biased in terms of gender, race,

ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other protected characteristics. Although guardrails may have been put in place, [text produced by generative AI models can reproduce these biases.](#)

- *Ethical issues related to training.* To guard against toxic material (e.g., violent, illegal, distressing) being included in training data, outsourced content labelers were used to review training data and remove unwanted text. Such outsourcing often involves exploitative practices – for example, [employees who are resident in the Global South and are paid very little for distressing work](#). Similar content moderation practices are commonly used by social medial platforms.
- *Climate & environmental impact.* Training generative AI models requires vast amounts of [energy](#), [hardware](#), and [water](#) to keep that hardware cool. Such impacts, [which will only continue to grow](#), are rarely considered in the rush to adopt the technology.

Beyond these concerns, the use of these tools has significant implications for our expectations about assessment in the university. The goal of assessment is to support learning and to ascertain the attainment of learning objectives. A key assumption is that the work submitted for assessment is **original work completed by the learner, and that the learner is the sole author**. To earn your degree, you must be able to demonstrate full ownership of, and accountability for, the work submitted and must appropriately acknowledge all sources used in the preparation of the work.

These assumptions are encoded in the principles of **academic integrity**, defined by the National Academic Integrity Network¹ as, “**the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting.**” The principles of academic integrity entail that, “It is the responsibility of the enrolled learner to ensure that all submitted work for assessment purposes in an academic setting, which includes but is not limited to, text, graphics, tables, formulae, or any representation of ideas in print, electronic or any other media, in addition to artefacts, computer software and algorithms, correctly **acknowledges the source of any data which is not original to the learner.**”

References/Sources:

[College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research](#)

[Library guidelines on acknowledging and reference GenAI.](#)

6.1 Oral Exam

Regardless of the declaration, as part of the marking process, markers may require students to complete a 10-minute oral exam to ensure that work submitted by the student is their own work and that it evidences their attainment of the learning outcome.

6.2 Further Information

Generative AI tools are a family of tools that incorporate natural language processing and deep learning techniques to generate answers (text, code, images etc.) to questions and prompts. The purpose of this policy is to outline how students' use of generative AI fits in to our expectations regarding academic integrity.

It is first important to be aware that there are a number of serious concerns about generative AI tools and there are significant limitations to the outputs they produce. These include (please see links for further information):

- *Accuracy of the information produced.* Generative AI tools work by predicting the next most likely word in a sequence. [This means that the tools are susceptible to so-called "hallucination"](#) – producing text that is grammatically correct and which may have face validity but is not factually correct.
- *Plagiarism and lack of source attribution.* [The sources of information relied upon to construct the text produced may not be appropriately acknowledged](#) and, where sources are provided, the references may be fabricated.
- *Ethical issues related to data sourcing.* Many generative AI models were trained on materials obtained from the internet and include [text, images, code](#) etc., that were proprietary, copyright-protected, or protected by non-commercial commons licenses. Using generative AI output risks these forms of plagiarism and copyright infringement.

- *Breach of TCD copyright.* If university module materials (e.g., slides, syllabus) are used to prompt or to guide the response of AI tools, this is a breach of TCD copyright and is illegal (see

<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/assets/pdf/Intellectual-Property-Policy-2022.pdf>.

- *Bias.* As part of training, the models that underlie generative AI were exposed to data obtained from the internet, which may be biased in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other protected characteristics. Although guardrails may have been put in place, [text produced by generative AI models can reproduce these biases.](#)

- *Ethical issues related to training.* To guard against toxic material (e.g., violent, illegal, distressing) being included in training data, outsourced content-labellers were used to review training data and remove unwanted text. Such outsourcing often involves exploitative practices – for example, [employees who are resident in the Global South and are paid very little for distressing work.](#) Similar content moderation practices are commonly used by social medial platforms.

- *Climate & environmental impact.* Training generative AI models requires vast amounts of [energy](#), [hardware](#), and [water](#) to keep that hardware cool. Such impacts, [which will only continue to grow](#), are rarely considered in the rush to adopt the technology.

Beyond these concerns, the use of these tools has significant implications for our expectations about assessment in the university. The goal of assessment is to support learning and to ascertain the attainment of learning objectives. A key assumption is that the work submitted for assessment is **original work completed by the learner, and that the learner is the sole author.** To earn your degree, you must be able to demonstrate full ownership of, and accountability for, the work submitted, and must appropriately acknowledge all sources used in the preparation of the work.

These assumptions are encoded in the principles of **academic integrity**, defined by the National Academic Integrity Network¹ as, “**the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting.**” The principles of academic integrity entail that, “It is the responsibility of the enrolled learner to ensure that all submitted work for assessment purposes in an academic setting, which includes but is not limited to, text,

graphics, tables, formulae, or any representation of ideas in print, electronic or any other media, in addition to artefacts, computer software and algorithms, correctly **acknowledges the source of any data which is not original to the learner.**"

Further concerns about academic integrity will be addressed under the Academic Integrity Policy and procedures: <https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity>.

7. Postgraduate Appeals Process

Postgraduate Appeals at School level: Research Students

Where a transfer/confirmation viva has been held and has determined that a student may not transfer to, or be confirmed on, the Ph.D. register, the student may appeal to the School Appeals Committee (Research Students). The grounds for appeal should be clearly stated and supported where necessary by documentary evidence. The Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate will convene and chair this committee composed of one Head of Discipline (not the student's Discipline) and one other academic staff member. At the Appeals Committee the student concerned should have representation appropriate to the formality of the process, for example, a supervisor, Course Co-ordinator, or other appropriate staff member. No one is appointed to an Appeals Committee where a conflict of interest might arise. Should the DTLPG experience a conflict of interest, she or he will be substituted by the Head of School. Appeals against the decision of a School Appeals Committee (Research Students) may be made in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who has the discretion to grant or deny the appeal. Appeals against the decision of the Dean of Graduate Studies may be brought to the Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Research). This committee will consider appeals concerning events occurring more than 4 months previously only in the most exceptional circumstances.

Appeals against the decision of the examiners of a research thesis

Where a viva voce of a thesis has been held and the thesis referred back for extensive revision, or the award of a lower degree, or outright failure is recommended, the Dean of

Graduate Studies informs the candidate of the verdict. If the candidate wishes to appeal the examiners' decision, she or he must apply in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who has the discretion to grant or deny the appeal. The grounds for appeal should be clearly stated and supported where necessary by documentary evidence. If the Dean of Graduate Studies denies the appeal, the student may appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Research). This committee will consider appeals concerning events occurring more than 4 months previously only in the most exceptional circumstances. The Postgraduate Appeals Process is outlined in the [Calendar Part III](#) Section 1 – Appeals Process for Graduate Students. All appeals should be heard first at School level.

8. Links to Forms

[Confirmation Meeting Report Form](#)

[Annual Review Report Form](#)

[Intention to Submit Form](#)

[Masters By Research Annual Review Form](#)

[Guidelines for Submission of Theses](#)

8.1 Links to University Policies / Reference / Sources

[PG Student Learning Development](#)

[Student Complaints/Procedures If Conflict Arises Between Student and Supervisor](#)

[Equality Policy](#)

[Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy](#)

[Data Protection](#)

[My TCD](#)

[Academic Registry](#)

[Blackboard](#)

[Learning Technology Guides for Students \(Blackboard\)](#)