TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Handbook for Masters and Ph.D. students

2015–16

This handbook is also available electronically from the School's website: http://www.tcd.ie/slscs/postgraduate/phd-masters-research/
A note on this handbook

This handbook has been written for the guidance of postgraduate students in the School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences who are doing a research degree. All research students in the School are asked to familiarise themselves with its contents. It supplements, but does not supersede, the College’s general regulations for students (Calendar, Part II), the regulations that govern postgraduate study (Calendar, Part III) and guidelines issued from time to time by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning

The School’s Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning, or DPGTL, is Prof. Christer Gobl (Arts Building, Room 4038; tel. 01-896 2592; email cegobl@tcd.ie).

** New requirements for all students **

To ensure that students have a clear understanding of what plagiarism is, how Trinity deals with cases of plagiarism, and how to avoid plagiarism, a repository of information is now available at http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism.

For full details on what students are required to do, see Appendix IV of this handbook.
A note on the TCD Structured PhD

Since 2009 all PhD students are considered to be on a structured PhD programme. The structured elements include regular monitoring of progress as well as taught modules, which can be discipline-specific and may involve generic and transferable skills. Many such structured elements are already embedded in the TCD regulations. For details, see “The Trinity PhD”, pp. 3-4 http://www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/eNewsletter/Index.php.

Students registered after September 2013, are required to take modules worth a minimum of 10 ECTS. These may be taken at any time during the PhD.

Admission

Before making a formal application, prospective applicants are advised to consult the Graduate Studies Office website at http://www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/, from which information can be gained on general entrance requirements, residence and language requirements, fees and studentships, etc. Interested applicants are then advised to contact a member of the School's academic staff whose research interests match their planned area of study. Research interests in the School can be found on the School website by going to http://www.tcd.ie/slscs/staff/ and following relevant links. The Postgraduate Prospectus published by Trinity College also contains useful information. A potential supervisor may be in a position to offer guidance in the development of a research proposal.

Application to do a degree by research is made through the SITS system, which is accessed via the web portal my.tcd.ie. The application should include a detailed research proposal. This proposal should consist of several pages which set out the proposed research topic and cover basic questions, including, for example, why in the applicant’s opinion the topic is worthwhile and how the topic will satisfy the college’s regulations on originality (see Appendix I below). The proposal should be framed by a critical discussion of previous research in the area.
All applications are considered by the School’s research committee, which includes where possible the likely supervisor. Candidates may be invited to attend for an interview. There is considerable competition for the restricted number of places available on the School’s postgraduate student register, and it may not be possible to offer places to all applicants.

**Academic progress and transfer procedures**

**Academic progress**

Students are allowed to re-register at the beginning of each academic year provided that, in the judgement of their supervisor in consultation with the DPGTL, they are making satisfactory progress. All research students and their supervisors must complete an annual progress report as an essential element in monitoring the progress of each student. The report form can be found on the Graduate Studies website at the following address: [http://www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/Local/Student/gl-student.html](http://www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/Local/Student/gl-student.html)

Completed report forms must be signed and returned to the DPGTL by 31 December for September registrants, or 30 June for March registrants.

**Transfer/confirmation procedures**

Students wishing to transfer from the Masters to the PhD register, or PhD students who wish to remain on the PhD register in keeping with College's post-2008 regulations, are required to prepare a transfer/confirmation report in consultation with their supervisor (see *Calendar, Part III*).

The usual format for the report is to include:

(i) a preface which introduces the research topic as a subject of significance suitable to for a PhD,

(ii) two or three substantial chapters which demonstrate a good command of relevant previous research and which clearly define the new research question to be addressed by the PhD, including, where appropriate, preliminary results of empirical data collection, and
(iii) a concluding section which gives an indication of how the research is intended to continue towards a submission for examination at PhD level. Questions about the nature of the report should be directed to the supervisor or, where appropriate, the Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning.

The report should be submitted to the supervisor in the first instance for comments. Following any necessary revision, two printed copies of the report (1.5 or double spaced, printed on one side of A4 paper, using standard margins) are then submitted for consideration by a transfer panel established by the DPGTL.

The panel, usually chaired by the DPGTL (unless he is the candidate’s supervisor), interviews each candidate for transfer. The supervisor normally attends the interview as an observer. Written feedback is given to the student as soon as possible after the transfer interview.

For students applying to transfer onto the PhD register, the recommendation of the transfer panel shall be one of the following: (a) transfer to the PhD register, (b) transfer after some minor changes have been made to the transfer report, (c) transfer not recommended at this time; a new transfer report to be written and transfer interview to be held, (d) continue on the Masters register to complete a Masters thesis, or (e) not to continue as a research student.

For students applying to remain on the PhD register and complete a PhD, the recommendation of the panel shall be as follows: (a) remain on the PhD register, (b) remain on the PhD register, subject to some minor changes being made to the transfer report, (c) continuation on the PhD register not recommended at this time; a new report to be written and interview to be held, (d) transfer to the Masters register to complete a Masters thesis, or (e) not to continue as a research student.
Research ethics

Research students should ensure that they follow appropriate standards of research ethics. Ethical practice is not a uniform set of 'dos and don'ts', but, rather, an evolving set of understandings which varies according to research area, research method, and the ethical perspectives of the individuals involved.

The School maintains information on ethical research, as well as details of procedures to be followed in order to gain approval for research involving human subjects. Additional information and application forms for ethics approval are available from the School website at http://www.tcd.ie/slscs/research/ethics. Further information on application procedures is available from Prof. Lorna Carson, who can be contacted at carsonle@tcd.ie.

The Dean of Research also maintains documentation on general principles of research ethics in College, which can be accessed at http://www.tcd.ie/research/dean/. The Director of Research in the School, Prof. Lorraine Leeson (leesonl@tcd.ie), may also provide further information.

Some professional bodies and institutions have their own research ethics procedures, and students are advised to consult these where appropriate. In all cases, it is a fundamental responsibility of the research student to ensure that research is carried out following recognised principles of ethical research, including formal approval where necessary.

A summary of key issues in ethical research involving human subjects includes the following points.

- *Informed consent.* Individuals who participate in research should know what participation in this research implies for them. Consent should be obtained from participants in research projects. Students should consult with their supervisor over the design of consent forms and means of gaining written or oral consent as appropriate.

- *Record keeping.* Research students should keep clear and accurate records of their research procedures and interim results. As far as is practicable, primary data from research projects should be archived within the School. In many types
of research, no use of the data should be made which does not conform to the terms of the written consent originally obtained from participants.

- **Integrity.** Research projects should be pursued in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, taking account of relevant legislation, especially concerning data protection and freedom of information.

- **Honesty.** Fabrication or falsification of results, plagiarism, misquotation or misrepresentation of other authors, misattribution or non-attribution of authorship, and deception of any kind are completely unacceptable. Students are responsible for ensuring that they follow all College regulations concerning plagiarism (see further Appendix IV).

- **Conflict of interest.** Any conflict of interest that a research student encounters in the course of doing research – whether financial, personal, political, or academic – should immediately be discussed with the student’s supervisor or with the DPGTL, Head of Department, or Head of School, as appropriate.

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**The research student and the School**

**Postgraduate seminars**
The School periodically arranges evening seminars at which one or two students report on the progress of their research. All students are urged to attend these seminars, and to report on their own research at an appropriate time.

**Representation on School Committees**
Research students elect a representative to the School Committee in the School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences. This representative also sits on the School Executive. The School Committee normally meets once each term to discuss a wide range of issues, and students are encouraged to raise matters of concern at the School Committee through their representative.

**Safety**
All College departments display a Safety Statement. Students should familiarise themselves with the Safety Statement(s) relevant to the parts of College they use regularly. Students’
attention is drawn especially to the importance of observing appropriate discipline when using any of the School’s clinical and technical installations or laboratory facilities. Further information and guidelines are also available from the College’s Safety, Health & Welfare website at http://www.tcd.ie/Buildings/Safety/.

Access
In certain circumstances it may be necessary for students to have access to one or another of the School’s technical installations outside normal working hours. In the event of such access being granted, students are required to give an undertaking that they will abide by whatever security arrangements are deemed appropriate by the Head of School or another designated member of the School academic staff.

Special needs
The School will endeavour to meet the special needs of individual students arising from any form of disability. Prospective students who may have special needs should make these needs known at the time of application for admission to the postgraduate student register. Information concerning the activities and services provided by the College's Disability Service is available at http://www.tcd.ie/disability/.

The student and the supervisor
The relationship between supervisor and student is a critical factor in determining the quality of the student’s postgraduate experience. If there is to be successful collaboration between the two, both must recognise their own and the other’s responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the supervisor
At the beginning of each year of the student’s registration, the supervisor negotiates with the student a work plan for the year which takes account of the supervisor’s foreseeable absences from College and, in the case of part-time students, the student’s other commitments. The supervisor keeps a written record of this work plan against which to measure the student’s progress at the end of the year.
Supervision is based on regular written reports from the student. The frequency of such reports varies, but typically they are submitted at intervals of not less than one and not more than two months. This requirement applies to all students, whether they are living in Ireland or abroad.

Supervisors of students living in Ireland expect to discuss each progress report in a face-to-face meeting with the student. At the end of each meeting the supervisor and student agree dates for (i) the submission of the next progress report and (ii) the next meeting. In the case of students living outside Ireland, a schedule of meetings (typically not fewer than three per year) forms part of the work plan for the year. In keeping with College regulations, periods of residence abroad, other than for field work or academic visits, require the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies following a recommendation from the DPGTL in consultation with the supervisor.

From time to time the supervisor may find it necessary to reschedule a supervision meeting, but as far as possible this is avoided.

When a student needs to use one of the School’s technical facilities in order to pursue research, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the student receives appropriate training.

**Responsibilities of the student**

The student is expected to adhere to the annual work plan negotiated with the supervisor, to submit progress reports on time, and to keep appointments with the supervisor.

The student may not make a significant change in the direction of the research without first discussing this change and its implications with the supervisor, and securing the supervisor’s approval. In exceptional circumstances where a radical change of topic is proposed, it may be appropriate for a new supervisor or a co-supervisor to be appointed.

It is each student’s responsibility to stay in touch with his or her supervisor. The student must notify the Student Records Office and the supervisor immediately of any change of address.

If research becomes difficult for other than academic reasons – perhaps as a result of illness or an unexpected change in
domestic or professional circumstances – the student should inform the supervisor immediately. It is of course for the student to decide how much information to give to the supervisor. Students should be aware, though, that a supervisor cannot make a persuasive case for special consideration on behalf of the student if the student has not provided the supervisor with all relevant information.

**Resolving problems**
If a student has a problem with his or her supervisor, the student should discuss the problem with the DPGTL in the first instance. If the Director is unable to resolve the problem (or in cases where the Director is the supervisor), the student is referred to the Head of School. If the Head of School is unable to resolve the problem (or in cases where the Head of School is the supervisor), the student will be advised to consult the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS – see further Appendix II) and the Graduate Students' Union (Appendix III) may also be able to offer advice and in some circumstances may be able to represent the student.

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**Examination of theses**

**Submission of theses**
The regulations governing the submission of theses are as laid down in the Calendar, Part III. Key points to bear in mind from these regulations are:

- Normally an M.Litt. or research M.Sc. thesis should contain a maximum of 60,000 words of text; a PhD should not exceed 100,000 words. Footnotes and bibliography do not count in the word limit.
- Two soft-bound (not ring-bound) copies of the thesis are submitted for examination. These copies must use 1.5 or double spacing and be printed on one side of the page only.
- Once the thesis is approved, two hardbound copies of the thesis are submitted. The hardbound copy should be printed on paper of a weight of at least 90gsm and printed on both sides of the page. Calendar regulations prescribe the form of binding to be used.
• A student must be registered at the time of submission of the thesis.

**Procedure for examination of theses**
The procedure for the examination of theses is as laid down in the *Calendar, Part III* ([http://www.tcd.ie/calendar/1415-2/part-3/](http://www.tcd.ie/calendar/1415-2/part-3/))

**Appointment of examiners**
Theses are examined by both an external and internal examiner. Examiners are nominated by the DPGTL in consultation with the supervisor, approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and appointed by the University Council. The supervisor is never the internal examiner. In some circumstances (for example, where the student is also a member of the academic staff) examination is by two external examiners.

**Viva voce examination**
A *viva voce* examination (viva) is mandatory for PhD candidates. Sometimes a viva may also be held for M.Litt. and research M.Sc. theses, but this is not mandatory, and the decision as to whether a viva is required is made on a case by case basis. The DPGTL normally chairs the viva, though alternative arrangements are made where the Director is either the supervisor or the internal examiner, or in other exceptional circumstances. College regulations give the supervisor the right to be present as an observer at the viva unless the student requests otherwise. In practice within the School, the supervisor often waives the right to be present. The format of the *viva voce* examination is determined by the examiners in consultation with the DPGTL or other person chairing the examination.

**Time scale**
Every effort is made to ensure that theses are examined as promptly as possible. A period of two to three months between submission of the thesis and the holding of the *viva* is usual.
APPENDIX I

The College’s descriptors for the award of a PhD degree (Calendar, Part III, http://www.tcd.ie/calendar/1415-2/part-3/):

1.4 Research Doctorates (Level 10, National Framework of Qualifications):

Research doctorates should continue to be known as Doctor in Philosophy. Those who hold this award have been able to demonstrate, through a variety of assessment procedures:

• a systematic comprehension of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field
• that they have the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity, rigour and discrimination, which may involve the development of new skills, techniques, tools or materials
• 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 developing a body of work, some of which merits publication in national or international refereed publications
• that they can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with 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.
The Postgraduate Advisory Service is a unique and confidential service available to all registered postgraduate students in Trinity College. It offers a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral and professional supports dedicated to enhancing your student experience.

**Who?**
The Postgraduate Advisory 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 our website: [http://www.tcd.ie/Senior_Tutor/postgraduate/](http://www.tcd.ie/Senior_Tutor/postgraduate/)

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

**What?**
The PAS exists to ensure that all Postgrad students have a contact point who they can turn to for support and information on college services and academic issues arising. Representation assistance to Postgrad students is offered in the area of discipline and/or academic appeals arising out of examinations or thesis submissions, supervisory issues, general information on Postgrad student life and many others. If in doubt, get in touch! All queries will be treated with confidentiality. For more information on what we offer see our website.

If you have any queries regarding your experiences as a Postgraduate Student in Trinity don’t hesitate to get in touch with us.
THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' UNION

Located on the second floor of House Six, the Graduate Students' Union is an independent body within College that represents postgraduate students throughout College. Upon registration, all postgraduates are automatically members. It is run by two full-time sabbatical officers; this year they are the President, Ryan Kenny, and the Vice-President, Sarah Smith. As the head and public face of the Union, Ryan is responsible for strategy and policy formulation, whilst sitting on a wide range of committees. Sarah is the Union's Education and Welfare Officer and advises students on matters such as academic appeals and supervisor relationships. She's also here to help on more personal matters, such as financial concerns, illness and bereavement. Any discussions about such concerns are treated with the strictest confidentiality. Contact us at either: president@gsu.tcd.ie, or vicepresident@gsu.tcd.ie.
APPENDIX IV

College Regulations on Plagiarism

To ensure that students have a clear understanding of what plagiarism is, how Trinity deals with cases of plagiarism, and how to avoid plagiarism, a repository of information is available at http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism

Students are required to:

(i) Visit the online repository to find out about how Trinity deals with plagiarism and how it can be avoided. Students should also familiarise themselves with the Calendar statement on plagiarism and the sanctions which are applied. The Calendar statement on plagiarism is appended below.

(ii) Complete the ‘Ready, Steady, Write’ online tutorial on plagiarism at http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/ready-steady-write. Completing the tutorial is compulsory for all students.

(iii) Familiarise themselves with the declaration that must be signed when submitting course work. This declaration is available at http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/declaration

(iv) Contact their supervisor if unsure about any aspect of plagiarism.

CALENDAR STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM
– from the TCD Calendar 2015–16, part III, §1.32

1. General

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.

2. Examples of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can arise from actions such as:

(a) copying another student’s work;

(b) enlisting another person or persons to complete an assignment on the student’s behalf;

(c) procuring, whether with payment or otherwise, the work or ideas of another;

(d) quoting directly, without acknowledgement, from books, articles or other sources, either in printed, recorded or electronic format, including websites and social media;

(e) paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, the writings of other authors.

Examples (d) and (e) in particular can arise through careless thinking and/or methodology where students:

(i) fail to distinguish between their own ideas and those of others;

(ii) fail to take proper notes during preliminary research and therefore lose track of the sources from which the notes were drawn;
(iii) fail to distinguish between information which needs no acknowledgement because it is firmly in the public domain, and information which might be widely known, but which nevertheless requires some sort of acknowledgement;

(iv) come across a distinctive methodology or idea and fail to record its source.

All the above serve only as examples and are not exhaustive.

3. Plagiarism in the context of group work

Students should normally submit work done in co-operation with other students only when it is done with the full knowledge and permission of the lecturer concerned. Without this, submitting work which is the product of collusion with other students may be considered to be plagiarism.

When work is submitted as the result of a Group Project, it is the responsibility of all students in the Group to ensure, so far as is possible, that no work submitted by the group is plagiarised.

4. Self-Plagiarism

No work can normally be submitted for more than one assessment for credit. Resubmitting the same work for more than one assessment for credit is normally considered self-plagiarism.

5. Avoiding Plagiarism

Students should ensure the integrity of their work by seeking advice from their lecturers, tutor or supervisor on avoiding plagiarism. All schools and departments must include, in their handbooks or other literature given to students, guidelines on the appropriate methodology for the kind of work that students will be expected to undertake. In addition, a general set of guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism is available at http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism.

6. If plagiarism as referred to in paragraph (1) above is suspected, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) will arrange an informal meeting with the student, the student’s Supervisor and/or the academic staff member concerned, to put their suspicions to the student and give the student the opportunity to
respond. Students may nominate a Graduate Students’ Union representative or PG advisor to accompany them to the meeting.

7. If the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) forms the view that plagiarism has taken place, he/she must decide if the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure set out below. In order for this summary procedure to be followed, all parties noted above must be in agreement. If the facts of the case are in dispute, or if the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) feels that the penalties provided for under the summary procedure below are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, he/she will refer the case directly to the Junior Dean, who will interview the student and may implement the procedures set out in Section 5 (Other General Regulations).

8. If the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) will recommend one of the following penalties:

(a) Level 1: Student receives an informal verbal warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will be assessed and marked without penalty;

(b) Level 2: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will receive a reduced or capped mark depending on the seriousness/extent of plagiarism;

(c) Level 3: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. There is no opportunity for resubmission.

9. Provided that the appropriate procedure has been followed and all parties in (6) above are in agreement with the proposed penalty, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) should in the case of a Level 1 offence, inform the Course Director and, where appropriate, the Course Office. In the case of a Level 2 or Level 3
offence, the Dean of Graduate Studies must be notified and requested to approve the recommended penalty. The Dean of Graduate Studies will inform the Junior Dean accordingly. The Junior Dean may nevertheless implement the procedures as set out in Section 5 (Other General Regulations).

10. If the case cannot normally be dealt with under summary procedures, it is deemed to be a Level 4 offence and will be referred directly to the Junior Dean. Nothing provided for under the summary procedure diminishes or prejudices the disciplinary powers of the Junior Dean under the 2010 Consolidated Statutes.