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Disclaimer

Please note that this document is for information purposes only. It DOES NOT supersede The Research Regulations or procedures that have been approved by academic council and are available at www.ait.ie/graduateschool
Athlone Institute of Technology Research Mission and Goals

Research Mission
To provide student-centred, career-focused education, training and applied research programmes for a diverse cohort of learners within a professional and supportive environment. The Institute is fully committed to intensive engagement with regional business, enterprise and social communities while maintaining a global orientation.

Research Goals
The ultimate research goal of the Institute is to develop the research candidate to become a world class and renowned researcher; in doing so the reputation of the Institute and that of its faculty and staff will be enhanced. This is achieved by the gaining of research funding, the publishing of learned articles, the spin out of research through development of intellectual property, technology transfer and most importantly the award of Masters and PhD degrees.

The Institute has delegated authority to award Masters and PhD degrees in the areas of

- Toxicology
- Microbiology
- Polymer Engineering
- Communications and Software Engineering

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and may be the facilitator of research in other areas, supported by QQQ as the awarding body.

Whilst the Institute develops and supports its research strategy by providing human and physical resources, its principle role is in maintaining the standard of the awards that it offers. To this end the Institute has published research regulations and research governance documents www.ait.ie/graduateschool to ensure that each research candidate is treated in a fair and equal manner, in line with international norms in regard to gaining an award.

It should be noted however, that whilst encouraging, supporting and administrating research at the Institute, in line with its research strategy, it is not responsible for the funding of the individual researcher past the administration of stipends and fees for research funding gained in the name of the Institute. Further to this, entry to the Institute does not entitle the candidate to an exit award.

The Institute will however, attempt to support the research candidate during their journey through their chosen programme by offering training programmes, and personal supports.

Postgraduate Research Degrees
Athlone Institute of Technology offers Masters and PhD research awards in line with QQQ specification at Level 9/10. Both awards require the investigation of fact, its communication to a wider audience, and the defence of a thesis based on the research. The normal form of a Master’s thesis is a monograph, with a PhD thesis being in either a monograph or article based format (see Appendix 2 of the Research Regulations www.ait.ie/graduateschool. The award titles are listed below.
The core of the Research degree award is for the candidate to develop advanced skills in carrying out independent research with the guidance of a supervisor. The thesis demonstrates a critical application of specialist knowledge and makes an independent contribution to scholarship in the defined research area. Whilst both Masters and PhD awards contain the same basic attributes, a Masters award is the application of existing knowledge, whilst the PhD is the creation of new and original knowledge.

The submitted thesis in the required format should be deemed of a satisfactory standard in line with QQI requirements (QQI, 2017). On completion the candidate should be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced learning in research skills and mastery of appropriate techniques, such as the use of archival or primary evidence, analysis of data, and judgement of conflicting evidence.
- Demonstrate specialist knowledge in the area of their research.
- Present the results of their research in publishable quality or work towards incorporating their findings in further research.
- Demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, research ethics.
- Work both individually and as a team member.
- Carry out research with honesty and integrity.
- Network with a wider community.
- Develop their career path and personal effectiveness.

The Research programmes also include additional personal and professional development elements, such as:

(i) Generic modules
(ii) Discipline specific modules
(iii) Elective modules of learning from the advanced educational programme for Masters students at AIT.

The programme of supervised research and advanced education and training leading to the research degree may be pursued on a full-time or a part-time basis.

Application and Entry to Research Degree Programmes

Prior to applying to enter a research programme at the Institute, it is necessary that the candidate is aware of:

- The minimum academic requirements for entry.
- Available research projects/expertise within the Institute.
- Available funding to carry out the research, and the specific terms of the funding.
- Eligibility to carry out research in Ireland (visas etc.)
- Fees
- How to define the proposed research work
- Research ethics
The application process  
Health and safety  
Intellectual Property  
Leave of Absence  
Withdrawal from a programme.

**Entry Requirements**

The primary degrees referred to in this section are Level 8 or equivalent honours degrees as defined by the National Framework of Qualifications in a discipline that is relevant to the field of research.

- The minimum requirements for entry to a research masters are as follows:
  - An honours primary bachelor’s degree with a minimum classification of 2.2 honours or equivalent qualification
  - A postgraduate diploma equivalent to a 2.2 honours Level 8 award.

- The normal entry route for inclusion on the PhD registrar is transfer from the master’s register. Where direct entry to the PhD register is available, the minimum entry requirement is an honours primary bachelor’s degree with a minimum classification of 2.1 honours.

- Persons who do not possess a primary bachelor’s degree may be considered for entry to the master’s register as indicated in the research regulations [www.ai.ie/graduateschool](http://www.ai.ie/graduateschool) via a qualifier programme.

**Research Projects/Expertise**

Persons who are interested in pursuing a postgraduate research degree at the Institute should consult with the Institutes website, the Faculty, Research Institutes or individual supervisors to determine the current available opportunities.

**Available funding to carry out the research**

a. Research Grant Funded Projects:

Research proposals will be generated by individuals from Faculties or Research Institutes and submitted to internal and external funding bodies with the approval of the Office of Funded Research Support Services.

If funding is secured the Office of Funded Research Support Services, will advertise:

(i) For eligible postgraduate applicants on the AIT website to undertake the funded projects

(ii) Interested candidates should complete the AIT Postgraduate Research Application Form (PRA Form 1) and submit it to Office of Funded Research Support Services at AIT, (Application procedure outlined below).

The Office of Funded Research Support Services will coordinate the postgraduate research student selection and recruitment process. Once the applicant is identified, the research supervisor will liaise with the applicant and submit an ‘Application for Registration of a Research Degree Programme (GS1 Form)’ to the Graduate School.

b. Self-Funded Projects

A Candidate who intends to Self-Fund his/her research **MUST** develop the project outline with a perspective primary supervisor. Having agreed the project outline with the supervisor and the
supervisor being willing to undertake the supervision role, the candidate applies to enter the Institute using Form GS1

**Eligibility to carry out research in Ireland**

For non-EU citizens there may be a requirement to gain a visa. Please note the Irish Immigration policy of duration of stay. ([http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Students](http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Students))

**Research Fees**

The schedule of fees is available from the Institute’s fees and grants office ([https://www.ait.ie/life-at-ait/registry/Fees](https://www.ait.ie/life-at-ait/registry/Fees)).

Fees fall into two categories: EU candidates and non EU candidates.

**Criteria for Determining EU Fee Status**

A student, who has completed a four-year undergraduate degree programme at the Institute and has paid full non-EU fees during this time, will pay EU fees if he/she continues to study at the Institute as a research student.

Students admitted under the non-EU student classification category shall not be permitted to change their status to that of an EU student following programme admission.

Applicants not satisfying conditions (a) or (b) below are liable for non-EU fee rates

(a) **EU fees**

(1) **Nationality Test**

EU passport or original Irish birth certificate, original EU nationality identity card, or official Irish refugee status (requires the appropriate original letter from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform indicating that the appropriate status has been granted) or reunified family members of an official Irish refugee (requires original letter from Minister of Justice which confirms family member status under Section 18 of Refugee Act 1996, and GNIB registration card. Residency, for the purposes of the free fees initiative, commences from the date on the GNIB registration card (date of issue) or EEA/Swiss nationality.

**AND**

(2) **Previous Work/Studies Test**

An applicant must have spent three of the last five years in full-time study or work in an EU Member State or EEA/Swiss State prior to the commencement of the course.

This full-time study/work requirement will be deemed satisfied in the case of an applicant for whom a spouse is claiming a tax benefit, which must be confirmed by a P21 form or evidence of social welfare benefits.

(b) **EU Fees**

(1) **Residency Test**
An applicant’s principal residence for the purpose of taxation must have been in a European Union Member State or EEA/Swiss State for a minimum of three of the five years prior to entry to the Institute. Principal residence excludes residency for educational purposes.

If an applicant is under 23 years of age on the start date of the course, the principal residence for the purpose of taxation of the parents will be examined. If an applicant is over 23 years of age on the start date of the course, the principal residence for the purpose of taxation of the applicant is examined.

A P21 form will be required in both instances

**AND**

(2) Previous Work/Studies Test

An applicant must have spent three of the last five years in full-time study or work in an EU Member State or EEA/Swiss State prior to the commencement of the course. Prior residence as a full-time student does not necessarily ensure eligibility for the EU rate of fees. Students classified for fee purposes as non-EU will not be permitted to change their fee status following admission.

This full-time study/work requirement will be deemed satisfied in the case of an applicant for whom a spouse is claiming a tax benefit, which must be confirmed by a P21 form or evidence of social welfare benefits.

Postgraduate research students are required to have paid all fees and/or charges, prior to submission of their Notice of Intention to Present Form. Failure to maintain good financial standing and to discharge fees/charges owing to the Institute will negatively impact the student’s ability to pursue a course of study/research, to sit examinations and/or be issued with their examination results.

Note the Irish Immigration policy of duration of stay ([http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Students](http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Students))

**How to Define the Proposed Research Work**

Prior to applying, all research students have to prepare in conjunction with their supervisor a short research proposal (approximately 1000 words). The research proposal is intended as a basis for further discussion of your thesis topic before you start your work. The aim of this preliminary activity is to ensure that you enter your first year as a research student with a clear sense of topic area and purpose. It therefore should be a topic in which you are interested and which will maintain your interest over the duration of your studies.

The format of the proposal should be:

1. **Abstract (250 words)**
   Summarise the objectives, the expected originality and the research methodology to be used.

2. **Research Context and Contribution to the Research Field:** Critically discuss the broad context of the research and the overall contribution which will be made to the subject area of research; include a description of the topic (with suggested title), indicating the general aims of the research and how these differ from previous published work in the field

3. **Objectives:** Summarise the key objectives of the research. List the main questions or hypotheses to be addressed by your research, and indicate practical applications that the research might have.
4. **Review of the state of the art/current literature/current practice in the field of research:**
   Review the state of the art/current literature/current practice and critically appraise the topic of the proposed research with references to the scholarly literature as appropriate, and include as an appendix a short bibliography, citing the main works of reference.

5. **Research contributions:** Critically discuss how the proposed research has the potential to meet the minimum requirements for a Masters/PhD award.
   (i) Demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning
   (ii) Demonstrate a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning
   (iii) Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques
   (iv) Develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques

6. **Research methodology:** critically evaluate the methodology to be used in the proposed research and why it is appropriate to the research objectives.

7. **Work Plan:** Present the research work plan; critically review the main research tasks and timing. Include a Gantt chart.

8. **Ethical issues:** All postgraduate projects should be considered in line with AIT’s Research Ethics Policy.

### Research Ethics

Athlone Institute carries out its research to the highest ethical standards. A high standard of research ethics principles are essential for all researchers.

These principles aim to protect the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all actual or potential research participants. A summary of these research ethics principles are set out below.

**Respect for the dignity, worth and self-determination of all participants, in particular:**
- Having sensitivity to the dynamics of perceived authority or influence over participants;
- Preserving participants’ privacy and confidentiality;
- Obtaining informed consent before participation;
- Protecting participants’ rights to self-determination by allowing and facilitating withdrawal from the research process.

**Responsibility for the care of research participants and to wider society:**
- Considering all research from the participants’ standpoint;
- Considering the range of stakeholders who may be affected by the research;
- Identifying and minimising risks to physical, psychological and social wellbeing;
- Providing detailed debriefing to participants as to the outcomes and consequences of the research.

**Competence of the Researcher:**
- Demonstrate the capacity to carry out the research, or to avail of appropriate supervision to support the development of this capacity;
- Demonstrate that the research is sound methodologically;
- Demonstrate the capacity to identify ethics issues and to avoid them arising where possible, through appropriate research design;
• Demonstrate the skill/ training to deal with sensitivities that may arise in the course of the research, or to put in place appropriate supports for participants.

All research will be conducted in accordance with the policy of Athlone Institute of Technology Research Ethics Committee. ([https://www.ait.ie/uploads/.../AIT-Ethics-Guidance-Notes.doc](https://www.ait.ie/uploads/.../AIT-Ethics-Guidance-Notes.doc)).

**The Application Process**

The following flow chart summarises the stages of the application process.

**Stage 1**

A Candidate wishing to carry out research Athlone Institute of Technology, has to be able to fund their research by

- Applying for research grant funded projects
- Or
- Self-funding the project.

In either case a supervisor is assigned to the candidate, and the research proposal developed. Where necessary the proposal may need to be reviewed externally.

**Stage 2**

The completed registration document (GS1) is submitted to the graduate school, to be reviewed for completeness, qualifications, and English language requirement.

**Stage 3**

The application is passed to the Faculty Associate Dean for review at the Faculty Research Committee, for project content, supervision, and to ensure that the faculty can resource the research in the form of facility, time and supervision, the type of enrolment and where necessary the content of a qualifier programme.

**Stage 4**

Associate Dean of Research presents applications to the Graduate School Research Committee for review of qualifications, English language and approval where necessary of the qualifier programme.

**Stage 5**

On approval, for those on programmes where Athlone Institute of Technology have delegated authority the Graduate school enrolls the candidate, informs him/her of the requirement to register, and issues documentation/information. Finance updates the fee on Banner/stipend details are updated.

On approval where Athlone Institute of Technology doesn’t have delegated authority, documentation is submitted to QQI for approval. On approval from QQI the Graduate School enrolls the candidate, informs him/her of the requirement to register, and issues documentation/information. Finance updates the fee Banner/stipend details are updated.
Application Process

**Candidate** with the aid of his/her **Supervisor** submits to the **Graduate School**:
- Completed Application form
- Qualifications
- Where necessary English Language Certificates
- CV's for supervisors
- Identification/visa requirements etc.
- A detailed research proposal, including details of funding, external links and a Gantt chart.
- A copy of the external review report where necessary

**Graduate School** reviews application in regard to:
- Qualifications
- English Language Requirement
- Completeness of Application
- Identification/visa requirements etc.

Rejected

Approved

**Faculty Research Committee** reviews application in regard to:
- Content of the research project
- Proposed supervision arrangements
- Ability of Faculty to service the research (facilities, consumables, finance, etc.)
- Type of enrolment including where appropriate the content of the masters qualifyer programme
- Whether the research fits inline with the faculties research agenda

Rejected

Approved

**Graduate School Research Committee** reviews application in regard to:
- Availability of research funding
- Acceptable qualification
- Acceptable language skills Type of enrolment (masters qualifyer, masters or PhD)
- If necessary the content of the qualifyer programme
- Whether the research fits inline with the institutes research agenda

Rejected

Approved

**Finance Office** informed in regard to Fees/stipend/grant etc. and updates records

**Candidate enrolled onto Banner where AIT have Delegated Authority. Candidate 's submission passed to QQI where AIT doesn't have delegated authority**

**QOJ Approval**

**Candidate informed of decision by Graduate School with relevant documentation**

**Candidate Registers**
Health and Safety

Athlone Institute of Technology has established procedures to ensure the health and safety of each student at the Institute. Each postgraduate research student is obliged to familiarise themselves with the Institute’s Safety Statement, which is available through all departments in the Institute. Specific elements of the Safety Statement, as they apply to the individual student’s proposed work, are covered during the postgraduate research student’s induction process (Details of the student’s individual health and safety needs will be noted and outlined in his/her Individual Study Plan in consultation with the supervisory team).

Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property (IP): is an area of very substantial importance in our academic environment. The purpose of defining an Intellectual Property Policy is to provide guidance to staff, students and other relevant parties regarding issues such as ownership, income from intellectual property and the use of Institute facilities to ensure that the development of intellectual property is mutually beneficial. The Institute recognises and encourages the principle that Institute IP should be used for the greatest public benefit.

Commercialisation is often the most efficient means of promoting the widest possible dissemination and use of Institute IP. In such circumstances, it is appropriate and desirable for the Institute and the originator to benefit from the commercial exploitation of IP produced at the Institute.

To this end, the Institute has developed a policy on intellectual property which sets out the rules that govern the creation, ownership and commercialisation of intellectual property developed by AIT staff, students, and others participating in programmes carried out using AIT facilities, know how, confidential information or intellectual property (“AIT Assets”). The Institute has developed a series of contractual templates to facilitate this process and these documents are available on the Institute’s intranet (http://aitintranet/oodev/extservices/procedures.shtml). Postgraduate research students are required to reference these documents for guidance in this area.

Leave of Absence

In special circumstances (e.g. medically certified leave, financial difficulty), a student may be allowed a period of leave of absence. Application for leave is made on form GS8 via the supervisor and Associate Dean of Research. The application is reviewed by the Graduate School Research Committee as indicated in the flow diagram below. The duration of leave of absence is up to one year. However, in exceptional circumstances, this period may be extended for a further year by resubmitting form GS8.

Applicants should be aware of the financial implications of taking leave in regard to research funding etc. They should also note that leave of absence cannot be approved for academic reasons. The time an applicant is on leave does not count towards the minimum study time for an award and they may not submit for an award unless they are registered for a minimum of 1 year after re-admission, providing that the minimum registration time has been completed.

Prior to applying for re-admission, the student must review his/her work to date with his/her supervisor(s). In instances where the candidate’s research or data has been superseded or any required facilities/resources are no longer available, the supervisor(s) and Head of Department will review any revised research proposal. The candidate may be required to present their proposed research in a viva voce style review. Once the revised research proposal has been agreed and the Research Postgraduate
Readmission Form (GS5) has been completed and signed by the candidate, supervisor(s) and the Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Graduate school as indicated in the flow diagram below.

**Leave of Absence and Re-Admission**

**Leave of Absence Application**

- **Candidate & Supervisor** agree that a Leave of absence is needed. Candidate is made aware of stipend, project and regulation consequences.

  Form GS8 submitted to faculty ADR for presentation at Graduate School Research Committee

  **Graduate School Research Committee** reviews application based on:
  - Health (medical cert required)
  - Financial hardship
  - Personal situation
  Leave cannot be approved on academic grounds or fee avoidance

  Not approved

  **Graduate School** Informs:
  - Student/Supervisor

  approved

  **Graduate School** Informs:
  - Student/Supervisor
  - Funding body/QF as appropriate
  - Registry/finance office amend records after meeting

**Re-Admission**

- **Candidate & Supervisor** agree the candidate is ready to be readmitted in line with Regulations

  Form GS9 submitted to faculty ADR for presentation at Graduate School Research Committee

  **Graduate School Research Committee** notes request. Registry and finance offices update records.
Withdrawal from a Programme

Research students who decide to withdraw must follow the procedures for withdrawal for all students, as indicated in the Institute’s Student Handbook.

Supervision

Each candidate for a postgraduate research degree shall be assigned a primary supervisor and Co-supervisor(s) who have been approved by the Head of Department, via the Faculty Research Committee and the Graduate School Research Committee. Where the research is interdisciplinary, the supervisory arrangements will reflect this.

Primary supervisors must in line with the Research regulations be qualified to the appropriate level of award that they are supervising, have expertise in the proposed research field and of supervising research, and be members of Athlone Institute of Technology. Primary supervisors must not themselves be registered for a research award. Alternative arrangements may be available where a co-supervisor has the above attributes, with the primary supervisor having a record of peer reviewed publications of international standing and a doctoral degree.

Co-supervisor(s) who are specialists in the research area may be an Athlone Institute of Technology academic staff member, may be employed by another institution, or be industry based.

Supervisors must be accessible to the student for consultation, advice and assistance and should meet the student on a regular basis during the academic year. They should also give the student all reasonable assistance regarding access to the material, equipment and other resources essential to the research.

Where applicable, the primary supervisor will inform the candidate of the taught modules that require attendance and/or examination and will outline a programme of generic and transferable skills to be completed before the annual review. The supervisor(s) will be responsible for the assessment of the individual study plan prior to the annual review.

Role and Responsibilities of Supervisor(s)

The supervisor has a very important role in providing academic guidance, authority and leadership within the subject area of the research programme. This includes the following:

(a) Supervision of the conduct and management of the project.

(b) Provision of written advice (and Institute policy documents) to the candidate in relation to;
- the suitability of the research proposal to the award being sought
- the nature of the work undertaken, the formulation of the research proposal and the standard expected
- the planning of the research and the specific direction of the research being undertaken
- the appropriate literature and sources
- attendance at appropriate research seminars and/or conferences
- the proper acknowledgement and citation of sources
- the requirement to monitor the work and performance of the student and to report this performance to the appropriate committees.

(c) Supporting the induction of the postgraduate research student into the Institute/school/department, by covering such topics as;
- identifying the learning support infrastructure and student services (accompanied by a tour of the Institute).
- performing introductions to relevant personnel, other research students, etc.
- informing the research student of Institute policies and procedures re: his/her responsibilities in terms of health and safety legislation.
- informing the research student of Institute policies and procedures.
- briefing the research student on the responsibilities of the supervisor and research student, and explaining the process to be followed if communication difficulties arise
- advising the student as to the appropriate induction training and taught programmes in research methodology and requisite techniques to ensure the research student has the necessary skills for sustained independent effort.

(d) (In consultation with the student) drafting a framework with indicative deadlines for the completion of distinct stages of the research programme and the completion of written work, to include such reports as may be required as part of the annual review. If/where alteration to the original plan of work is necessary, this should be fully discussed and agreed, and approval sought from the Faculty Research Committee and the Graduate School Research Committee

(e) Responsibility to maintain regular and frequent contact with the research student.

(f) To ensure that the research student is permitted to remain focused on their relevant project activities when/if based in a partnership organisation.

(g) Careful and regular monitoring of the progress of the research student’s work on a formal basis by setting appropriate academic standards and milestones to be attained by the candidate, reading written work produced by the student and providing constructive criticism within a reasonable specified time.

(h) Providing regular (and formal) feedback to the research student on whether progress and standards of work, including written or oral presentations, are meeting expected levels.

(i) Recommendation on transfer between registers, where appropriate.

(j) Identification, at as early a stage as possible, of student’s/project’s insufficient progress, in order to allow adequate time for re-orientation and correction.

(k) Communication and/or co-operation with other supervisor(s) where appropriate.

(l) Taking an active role in introducing the student to other workers in the field and the appropriate academic bodies and societies, and also advising as to the attendance at appropriate research seminars and/or conferences.

(m) Being accountable to the Institute’s academic council (through the Faculty Research Committee and the Graduate School Research Committee) for the satisfactory progress of the research project.

(n) Ensuring adequate supervision and support of the student and agreeing their activities over the normal academic vacation periods of the Institute.

(o) Provision of written advice to the candidate in relation to;

- the completion of the research process and the writing of the thesis
- the format and layout of the thesis and subsequent examination
- further work following receipt of first draft prior to external moderation of the thesis
- attendance at an oral examination (viva voce) where appropriate
(p) Arrangements with the examiner(s) and the candidate for an oral examination, where appropriate.

(q) Providing guidance, encouragement and counselling regarding the future career plans of the research student.

The Responsibilities of the Research Student

These include the following:

(a) Accepting ultimate responsibility for his/her own research activity and candidacy for a postgraduate degree:
   - familiarising him/herself with AIT’s rules and regulations [www.ait.ie/graduateschool](http://www.ait.ie/graduateschool) governing postgraduate awards by research and associated policies
   - engaging with, and completion of, the postgraduate research student induction process (Included in Individual Study Plan)
   - agreeing in advance the programme of work, and the aims, objectives and timeframe for the proposed programme, including the nature and timeframe for the proposed programme, including the nature and extent of the guidance expected, with the supervisor
   - agreeing a schedule of meetings with the supervisor(s) and arrangements for the evaluation of progress through Individual Study Plan (ISP)
   - maintaining regular and frequent contact with their supervisor through ISP portal.

(b) Ensuring that satisfactory progress is made with respect to the research project and any programme of work agreed with the supervisor(s).

(c) (In collaboration with the supervisor) being responsible for developing the direction and innovation of the research project as it progresses.

(d) Submitting written work in a specified and agreed time and format as agreed with the supervisor(s).

(e) Ensuring that any problems regarding the project are drawn to the attention of his/her supervisor(s) and providing adequate explanation of any failure to attend meetings or to meet other commitments, so that appropriate guidance may be offered.

(f) Ensuring that he/she is familiar with relevant aspects of the health and safety framework and academic rules and regulations of the Institute.

(g) Making appropriate use of teaching and learning facilities made available by the Institute.

(h) Preparing and continually updating the Individual Research Study Plan in conjunction with supervisor(s)

(i) Successfully completing the annual progression process.

(j) Successfully completing Generic, Specialists and Elective Modules of Advanced learning.

(k) Communicating to others in the academic community, both orally and in writing, his/her research findings in conjunction with the supervisor.

(l) Ensuring that any circumstances that might require his/her mode of study to be modified or his/her institutional registration to be extended, suspended or withdrawn, are brought to the attention of his/her supervisor(s).
(m) Acting as a responsible member of the Institute’s academic community.

(n) Undertaking a (requested) limited number of hours of laboratory practicals to undergraduates and/or tutorial work*, as directed by the Dean of Faculty/Head of Department in conjunction with the supervisor.

(o) Submitting a thesis in accordance with the Institute’s schedule of exams and in the correct format and in line with the research regulations.

(p) Not initiating formal contact with the external examiner(s).

(q) Maintaining current contact details with the Institute and notifying the Graduate School and supervisor(s) of a change of address or otherwise to ensure contact can be maintained with them.

(r) Attending the Institute in such a manner that allows them to be accessible for discussion and review of their progress. There may be latitude for income generation activities, such as teaching, tutoring, etc., within this contract for the duration of the research project.

*Students may be given the opportunity by the head of department to contribute to teaching through demonstrating practical classes, project supervision, marking and taking tutorials. Supervision of an undergraduate research project, for example facilitates development of their knowledge, skill and competence as per the associated award standard. The postgraduate student’s responsibilities will be clearly defined in writing, be compatible with their research responsibilities, and never exceed an average of six hours in total per week. All postgraduate candidates will be provided with appropriate training before commencing any teaching, and must be paid for this work.

Grievance procedures

Athlone Institute of Technology is committed to the full support of postgraduate research candidates at all stages from entry through to assessment. Research students should acquaint themselves with the Code of Discipline and the rules and regulations of the Institute.

If a student wishes to make a complaint in regard to the adequacy of supervision, it should initially be made verbally to the primary supervisor and Head of Department. If the matter remains unresolved, the student may make a formal written complaint to the supervisor and the Head of Department (or Dean, if the Head of Department is the supervisor). The written complaint will be reviewed by the Graduate School Research Committee within 10 days. If the outcome is deemed unsatisfactory to the research student and/or supervisor, then the complainant should follow the Institutes complaints procedure as per the Institutes Standards, Assessments and Awards document. Complaints about the adequacy of supervision will not be considered once the thesis has been presented for examination. Complaints other than those of adequacy of supervision must follow the Institutes complaint procedures indicated above.

Allegations of Misconduct against a research student will be investigated in accordance with the principles of natural justice and in accordance with the procedure set out in Section G of the Institutes Examination regulations and Procedures. The grounds for appeal and the formal procedures for dealing with appeals are set out in the Institute’s Examination Regulations document.

Publications

One of the major elements of research is the development of the ability to “present the results of research in publishable quality”. Publication is important as it is peer reviewed, and therefore is substantiated
as relevant and correct to a wide audience, a factor that is taken account of in the final examination of a thesis. It is important that published work is in the correct format required by the publisher, and references to other people’s work within the publication are correctly cited. In producing the paper, it is necessary to include those who had a major input to the work as authors, the position of the author, within the list, (the person who carried out most of the work is usually first, and the primary supervisor last), and to acknowledge those who either funded the research, or who aided the research at the end of the paper. In choosing where to publish it is important that the supervisor and student are in agreement, and the journal where the publication is submitted has a high impact factor. However, in early research it may be beneficial to publish in a conference proceeding to gain presentation and networking skills.

Planning the Research and Writing a Thesis

This section is intended to help students and faculty in planning, writing and completing the Master's or PhD thesis.

Planning the Research

The key to completing a research project on time and without compromising quality is to carefully manage your time and undertake the research in a rigorous and professional manner.

Planning your research involves identifying the tasks that need to be undertaken as part of the research and planning where and when to work on particular aspects of the project. Such tasks include reading, research and writing. It is important to be able to work on parallel tasks at the same time. For example, at the early stage you may be reading secondary source materials and revising your ideas, as well as working on research in the laboratory or an archive and undertaking some writing tasks. As the project progresses, it is likely that it will become more research-intensive and increasingly focused on writing tasks. Writing at an early stage ensures that you get used to the routines of writing; this can help you to complete your thesis in a timely manner.

Set realistic and achievable deadlines. It is important to see any research plan as an organic entity that will need to be revised as the research progresses.

On a practical level, one way to plan the research is to use a weekly/monthly planner and to plan each year out, using a one- to two-year plan for a Master's thesis or a three- to four-year plan for a PhD thesis.

What Do Master's and PhD Theses Look Like?

There is no simple answer to this question as research disciplines and areas of study differ. There are also differences between continental European universities, American institutions and Irish and British universities. The distinction between a Master's and a PhD thesis can sometimes be difficult to define. A PhD thesis usually seeks to make an original contribution to the field of study by generating new knowledge, involves more in-depth research than a Master's thesis and is often of publishable standard. The maximum length permitted for a Master's thesis is 60,000 words, whereas the limit for a PhD thesis is 100,000 words. In cases where a student is making good progress on a Master's thesis, they may be encouraged by a supervisor to upgrade, by means of a transfer examination, to the PhD register (see the Transfer from Master's to PhD Register section). The required format of the thesis is defined in Appendix 2 of the Research Regulations.

Stages of the Research

A research programme, whether a master's, traditional or structured PhD is not the same as the primary degree programme that has led you to this point. Whilst primary degrees have given you grounding in
the subject area, they tend to direct the way of learning, the subject matter and the deadlines. Research is a unique and individual task based around the person carrying it out. As such the subject matter is greatly influenced by the researcher, as are the deadlines and learning styles, with of course direction from your supervisor or supervisory team. Varun Grover indicated 4 stages of doctoral study: (http://www.ijds.org/Volume2/IJDSv2p009-021Grover21.pdf).

The four stages roughly cover the expected 4 years of research towards a PhD, albeit in an American model. The stages are however, very similar for the Irish system with similar problems or mistakes arising (see Grover’s paper). The stages have been set out as follows:

The Stage of Exploration (Year 1)

This is the start of the journey, and as such will be the most important period. Whilst a general outline of the project has been developed, it is now necessary to develop a full literature review that will lead to the research question, i.e. the reason why the research needs to be carried out. The literature review and research question will influence the methodology and direction that the research will take as the whole point of the research and thus the final thesis will be to answer the research question. Initially this period is where the student is the most motivated and strives to gain as much information on the topic as is available, which often leads to a period of despair deciding “what am I actually doing?” It is here that a number of mistakes often occur:

- As there are no defined deadlines (exams) for research things slip and the supervisor is not contacted, as often as they should.
- The material investigated isn’t logged adequately and is difficult to cite at later dates, or is forgotten about.
- The research goes off on a tangent or a number of tangents.
- Work outside the Institute, laboratory duties, clubs and societies act as a distraction.

The major element here is to keep in contact with your supervisor so that the direction of the research is not lost, your performance is monitored and that the annual progression review is passed with no hassle. The best way to ensure that your supervisor is up to speed with your work is to produce a report that highlights your work to date, and moves towards the end game of a literature review and research question.

For most students the literature review is an integral part of the first year. One important role of the literature survey is to find out the main lines of current thinking on your chosen subject by identifying and studying what has already been written on it. A literature review may be defined in terms of process and product.

“The process involves the researcher in exploring the literature to explore the status quo, formulate a problem or research enquiry, to defend the value of pursuing the line of enquiry established and compare the findings and ideas of others with his or her own. The product involves the synthesis of the work of others in a form that demonstrates the accomplishment of the exploratory process.” (Cited in Murray 2002: 102.)

As has been indicated earlier, it is important to keep a careful written record summarising and, where possible, placing into critical context what you have read, together with the correct citation. This will be useful later, as a reminder or as material to be incorporated into the thesis.
**Stage of Engagement (Year 2)**

The engagement stage is the development of the research question and the methods that will help you move towards the solution of the important research question. The understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods and ethics of research is paramount. In order to increase your understanding of these methods there are numerous research methods programmes offered by individual faculties, and the graduate school, along with other generic and transferable skills training that will help develop your ability to carry out research. In developing your research, you will need to be able to communicate your findings in research seminars and learned papers. This will move the research from the lab and the office of your supervisor to a wider audience. As such your standing in the Department/faculty will increase. A necessary evil that haunts most postgraduates is the need to carryout tutorial or lab based supervision. Whilst this is seen as a chore, it provides communication skills, a realisation that you understand the subject matter of your research, by conveying it to the undergraduate population, and most importantly you will interact with technical staff that you will often rely on in the development of your project.

Whilst the mistakes that could happen in Year 1 often roll over into Year 2 the main mistake in this stage is that of prioritising and synergising. It is important to develop your research and balance it with the workload that is allocated to you, together with generic and transferable skills, and of course your social and personal life which could include working to sustain yourself. Whilst you may be a competent researcher, prioritising individual elements is difficult and a balance must be maintained. Learn to say no, whether it is socially, or extra outside work, or extra teaching hours/training programmes. However, weigh up the benefits before doing so.

**Stage of Consolidation (Year 3)**

This is the most dangerous stage of the research. The success of the previous 2 years allows you to rest on your laurels, by this time a paper or a number of papers have been produced, you understand the research methods and are comfortable and are known in the lab area/library. Your supervisor trusts your judgement, so is less likely to chase you; you have a number of part written, part researched areas sitting on your desk, that makes you feel busy, and there are a number of new researchers that you feel as the old hand that you need to take under your wing. This stage for some researchers takes many years to get through. It is usually the lack of funding either personally or for a project that helps push the person onto the next stage. In slipping into this mode it is important for the researcher to ensure that the supervisor doesn’t lose interest and that the research takes priority, and expectations are kept realistic.

**Stage of Entry (Year 4)**

This stage may in some circumstances be combined with Year 3, but the time line is a rough guide. The entry stage is the movement from the academic life into the “profession”. It is the most difficult time, as it is often the time when the career decisions have to be made as to where to work, what sort of employment will I get, and when do I finish? Remember you will never finish a piece of research; you will give up on it. That may seem negative, but the reality is that research never ends, so it is up to you and your supervisor to decide when enough is enough. If you have been writing as you go along then there should be a number of chapters ready, your literature review, the research methods, your results, it only needs a discussion a conclusion and some tweaking. Hopefully there are publications that will back up your hypothesis and thus your conclusion. As the end is in sight, there is a tendency to put effort into finding the job, rather than writing up (the most difficult thing), and often the mistake at this point is leaving too early. Many research theses have never been completed for the sake of an extra few months to complete the write up.
Whilst you may be accepted onto a programme, this does not give you the right to an award at the end. The award is earned by examination by an external peer. As such you must work towards this goal as indicated above, if it is felt that you are not proceeding in a satisfactory way then it is possible that your registration will be halted. To ensure that this doesn’t occur, your work will be reviewed on a yearly basis (see below).

**Plagiarism**

Of all the academic crimes, plagiarism – using someone else’s work without acknowledgement or, worse still, passing it off as your own – is the most serious. The penalties in cases where plagiarism and/or collusion or other forms of academic cheating have been found to have taken place are severe.

**Problems with Writing**

Many research students (and sometimes even their supervisors!) face problems when it comes to writing; at times these problems may appear insurmountable. Research suggests that the most common problems include a slowness in formulating what to write, difficulty with bringing ideas into a coherent shape, not having the skills to write, not knowing the sub-routines of writing, behaviours and practices, a lack of instruction on writing skills and a lack of psychological support (isolation from peers). Even the most established academics have encountered some of these problems during their careers and may well understand the difficulties students face. Issues of this nature need to be addressed at an early stage to prevent them from developing into serious difficulties. There are some practicable solutions that can be tried. It is advisable to do more writing tasks, not just chapters, at an early stage. The types of task may vary, such as reviews of literature (or a critique of a particular article) and notes on research findings, but all aim to increase confidence and writing skills. Supervisors can help by outlining guidelines on writing tasks, including the length, scope, content, structure and aims of each task. In relation to the research plan, it is important to be able to visualise each stage of the research and to plan out the writing tasks. It is important to give and receive feedback on what has been written. There are different strategies for encouraging and improving academic writing, such as free writing and generative writing, all of which help get us to get into the routine of writing.

**Research Training and Professional Development**

As part of the postgraduate experience, students are encouraged to acquire and develop work skills in the course of their research. You should discuss with your supervisors your training needs and identify relevant and available courses to enhance specific research skills and techniques, research management, skills associated with personal effectiveness and communication, networking and team working, career management, and employability beyond the world of academia.

**Generic and Transferable Skills Training**

All research students are required to attend the annual induction programme for postgraduate researchers provided by the Graduate School. Additional to this, some faculties or departments may require students registered in their departments to attend short subject-specific induction courses. Research students are also required to complete 3 modules of the certificate of research practice, and in addition further modules will be determined by the supervisor(s) and student in accordance with the requirements of the individual students/programmes, and will form the basis, of the individual study plan.

Failure to complete a programme of Generic and transferable skills may impede a research student’s progression to subsequent years of study.
**Progression and Transfer from the Masters to PhD Register**

An annual review of the research carried out by all research students, is necessary to comply with QQI guidelines, and to ensure that the research student is progressing at the correct pace, in order to submit for an award.

Prior to the summer examination board, the registry will produce a broad sheet of all current research students for each faculty. Each faculty shall then convene a meeting of its Research Review Panel as defined in the Research regulations [www.ait.ie/graduateschool](http://www.ait.ie/graduateschool). These panels will review the student submission and a progress report of each candidate’s work in a format to be agreed by the faculty and communicated to the research candidate at the induction meeting. The format agreed by the faculty will include the review of the student’s individual study plan, the required programme modules and may also require the research student to: (a) present a transcript of their results in the taught element of the programme, if applicable, and/or (b) make a written presentation of their research and/or (c) present their research to the Research Review Panel.

The Research Review Panel’s assessment of research candidates will take cognisance of the approved research programme, the duration on the research register, part or full time registration and, where applicable, the programme structure approved by the Institute, and will annotate the broad sheet with one of the following outcomes:

(a) The student’s research progress is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant continuation on the masters or PhD register as applicable. (P)

(b) The student’s progress is not satisfactory and the student should be held at the current year of registration until being reassessed (H)

The broadsheet and a short report on each research student will be submitted to the Graduate School Research Committee for approval and presentation at the summer examination board, and subsequent ratification by Academic Council.

If a research student has submitted their thesis for examination, they should be awarded a P designation, without having to undergo the annual review.

Any research candidate who does not engage with the process will be deemed to be underperforming and assigned an H on the broad sheet.

Research students who have been awarded H at the review will not progress at the summer exam board and be held in his/her current year of study. They will however, be required to present their work at a viva voce examination, in the same format as the transfer from Masters to PhD examination in time for the annual repeat exam board. The decision of the examination panel will be reported to the Graduate School Research Committee and subsequently to the registrar’s office for updating the student record using form GS6 and will be one of the following:

(a) The candidate is now performing at an acceptable level and should progress to the next year of study.

(b) The candidate is not performing at the required level but should be held at the current year of study and reviewed at the next annual review.

(c) The candidate currently on the PhD register should be transferred to the master’s register.
(d) The candidate should be withdrawn from the register

In terms of decision b above, candidates held on the register will still be liable for academic fees, and the time does not count towards the minimum registration time for an award. Candidates who do not attend or engage with the examination will be removed from the register.

Candidates who successfully progress to the next year of study, or transfer registers are not guaranteed to gain an award.

Candidates on the PhD register may, with the written agreement of their supervisor(s), request that their registration be changed to the master’s register.

Research panels may be convened at other times of the year to review research student performance, at the request of the head of department, supervisor or research student, with decisions reported back to the Graduate School Research Committee (Form GS6)

Transfer from Masters Register to PhD Register

The supervisor will complete the GS2 form and submit to the Graduate School. The supervisor, or the candidate with written approval by the supervisor, submits 2 copies of the transfer document to the Graduate School at least 4 weeks before the proposed transfer date and prior to month 18 after registration. A transfer examination panel will be convened to enable students to present their research.

The examination panel will consist of a chairperson and 2 internal examiners where AIT has delegated authority, or a chairperson, internal and external examiner where the Institute does not have delegated authority (approved or accredited to make an award). The proposed panel will be nominated by the Dean of faculty and approved by the Graduate School Research committee.

The examiners may recommend one of the following options:
(a) The candidate’s research progress on the master’s register is of a standard to transfer to the PhD register.
(b) The candidate’s research progress on the master’s register is not of a standard to transfer to the PhD register, but may reapply within 6 months.
(c) The candidate should continue on the master’s register and submit for the award when completed

The Chairperson will inform the candidate of the outcome of the viva and inform the Graduate School of the outcome using Form G10.

If the examiners are not in agreement with the outcome of the panel, it will be referred to the Graduate School Research Committee for adjudication.

Research Progression Appeal

The grounds for appeal and the formal procedures for dealing with appeals are set out in the Standards, Assessments and Awards
Annual Progression Process

Registry produces a broadsheet of all research students for each faculty in April of each year

Faculty Research Review panel convened Broad sheet annotated with decisions on students and Form GS7 submitted to Graduate School

Faculties inform students of the progression requirements at their induction. Faculties remind students of requirements and deadlines for submission prior to the annual review

Registry updates Banner system as appropriate Fees are updated as appropriate

Broad sheets are reviewed at Graduate School Research Committee

Outcome reported to Summer Exam Board

Decision on student

Hold

Student and supervisor informed by Faculty

Registry produces report on students on hold Students informed of decision

Supervisor advises student of course of action

Registry, Fees office and Graduate School informed of outcome using Form RS15

Faculty forms exam panel prior to annual repeat exam board

Student informed of decision by Faculty

Continue to following Year

Progress

Hold to next review

Remove from Register
Intention to Present for Transfer to PhD Programme, Thesis Submission and Examination

The Supervisor liaises with potential examiners. Two internal examiners are required for Delegated Authority (DA) Programmes. Non DA programmes will require an external examiner. Intention to Present form is completed by the supervisor and forwarded to Graduate School.

Graduate School Research Committee reviews exam panel members

Reject

Approve

The supervisor, or the candidate with written approval by the supervisor, submits 2 copies of the thesis to the Graduate School. The Graduate School and only the graduate school forwards the thesis to the examiners with the relevant Institute information (e.g. examiners roles, report forms, expense forms etc.)

Supervisors organise a date and time for viva voca with the examiners and candidate and advise the Graduate School. The Graduate School formally contacts all relevant people regarding the procedures, date, time, location of the viva voca. The viva voca takes place and the student is informally informed of the outcome.

Examiners' report and chairperson's report (GS10) are submitted to Graduate School.

The outcome of the examination will be highlighted to the Graduate School Research Committee for noting. The Graduate School will notify registry and finance.
Thesis Completion, Submission and Examination

The following outlines the presentation, purpose, procedures, processes and timeframe in relation to the submission of Master's and PhD theses and viva voce examination for PhD candidates at Athlone Institute of Technology.

Submission of Thesis

The submission of final thesis for examination for Masters and PhD follow the same format with the examination for PhD requiring a Viva voce examination, where a master may not.

Stage 1

Intention to Present form GS3 is completed by the supervisor and Head of Department or Associate Dean Research or Faculty Dean, with relevant CV of proposed examiner. The Graduate School will formally contact the proposed examiners and inform the registry.

Stage 2

Submission of the thesis to the Graduate School, and receives a stamped dated receipt. The Graduate School and only the graduate school forward the thesis to the examiners with the relevant Institute information (e.g. examiners roles, expense forms etc.)

Stage 3

PhD candidates are advised of the date and format of the viva voce by their supervisor(s). The viva voce takes place and the student informal informed of the outcome.

Stage 4

Following the viva voce examination for PhD candidates and examination of thesis for Masters candidates. The examiners and chairperson submit their reports to the Graduate school.

Stage 5

Candidates make the changes prescribed by the examiners in the defined time period for reconsideration and agreement by the internal and or external examiner. Failure to do so will result in the examination process being completed and the candidate returning to the register and will need to complete a new examination.

Stage 6

The required number of corrected copies of the thesis and PDF electronic copy are submitted to the Graduate School.

Graduate School/Registry will inform the Associate Dean of Research of the candidates to be presented to the examination board.

Stage 7

The Institutes Exam Board convenes and subsequently, the graduate school forwards both a hard and electronic copy of the thesis to the library.
Thesis Submission and Examination

The Supervisor liaises with potential examiners. Intention to Present form is completed by the supervisor and forwarded to Graduate School with CV of proposed examiners.

Graduate School Research Committee reviews exam panel members

Approve

Reject

The supervisor, or the candidate with written approval by the supervisor, submits 2 copies of the thesis to the Graduate School. The Graduate School and only the graduate school forwards the thesis to the examiners with the relevant Institute information (e.g. examiners roles, report forms, expense forms etc.)

Where a viva voce is required, supervisors organise a date and time with the examiners and candidate and advise the Graduate School. The Graduate School formally contacts all relevant people regarding the procedures, date, time, location of the viva voce. The viva voce takes place and the student is informally informed of the outcome.

All examiner reports, and chairperson reports (where relevant), are submitted to Graduate School.

Candidates make the changes prescribed by the examiners in the defined time period for reconsideration and agreement by the internal and or external examiner. Once changes are approved, the Internal examiner will complete the GS13/GS16 ‘Confirming Award Form’ and submit to Graduate School.

Failure to complete prescribed changes will result in the examination process being completed and the candidate returning to the register. The candidate will need to complete a new examination.

One hardbound copy of the corrected thesis is submitted to Graduate School which in turn will be sent to Library. Graduate School organises examination board and informs supervisors, assistant deans of research, heads of department and deans of faculty of the date, time, location of exam board and a list of candidates to be presented.

Registry produces broadsheets.

The Institute’s examination board convenes and the award is ratified at Academic Council. The Graduate School sends the completed broadsheets to registry for inclusion on conferring lists. Registry will inform candidates of the conferring programme.
Presentation of Thesis

Athlone Institute of Technology uses the guidelines in Appendix 2 of the Research Regulations for the preparation of a research thesis. If you are in doubt as to what a finished Master's or PhD looks like, there are many examples available in the library. Alternatively, your supervisor will have some that they have supervised in the past.

PhD students, with the agreement of their supervisor(s), must decide as early as possible, usually by the end of the second year, whether the thesis will take the form of a monograph or an article-based work. Regardless of the approach adopted, students are strongly encouraged to publish the results of their research in peer-reviewed journals, other publications and to present at relevant conferences.

Candidates should carefully proofread their thesis for typographical errors. Professional proof reading or copy editing is not allowed. It is imperative that the thesis presented for examination and in its final amended format is produced to of a high standard and is clearly legible.

All PhD candidates and where requested by an external examiner a Masters candidate are examined by means of the viva voce examination. The requirements of each award is found in Appendix 5 of the Research regulations, and repeated in this document as Appendix 1.

It must be noted that any amendments required by the examiners are not negotiable, and failure to complete these in the defined time will result in the examination ending, and the need for the work to be re-examined. Further to this no additions may be made or requested to be made to the thesis content after the examination (e.g. further publications, additional conclusions etc) unless requested by the examiners at the viva voce.

General Requirements

The candidate is required to prepare three soft-bound copies of the thesis, which s/he must submit to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will forward one copy to each of the internal examiner, external examiner and Primary supervisor. At the conclusion of the examination process and when amendments and/or minor textual modifications (if required) have been made and signed-off as completed by the relevant examiner(s), the candidate must submit two hard-bound copies and one electronic copy of the final version of the thesis to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will deposit one hardbound copy and one electronic copy of the thesis in the library and will send the other hard-bound copy to the supervisor.

Language

The thesis will be written in English, Irish and in extenuating circumstances another language. Use of a language other than English or Irish, however, is subject to the availability of faculty with competence in the language concerned. The external examiner to be appointed must also be competent in the language in which the thesis is to be written. An abstract in English or Irish shall accompany each of the three copies of the thesis when they are being lodged with the Graduate School for examination. Notification of the intention to submit a thesis in a language other than English or Irish, including specification of the language in question, must be made to the Graduate School prior to the commencement of postgraduate studies. For further details, see Appendix 1 of the Research Regulations.
Electronic Copy

An electronic copy must be submitted as a single file in PDF format, or similar fixed format, to allow viewing and printing of the document exactly as it appears in the final hard-bound version. The file must be submitted on a portable data storage device, i.e., CD, memory stick, etc., together with the hard-bound copies.

Length of Thesis

A master’s thesis should not exceed 60,000 words. A PhD thesis should not exceed 100,000 words. The word-count limits apply to the abstract and numbered chapters only and exclude appendices, footnotes, tables and bibliography.

Format of Thesis

The thesis should be typewritten and submitted on A4 white 80g/m² paper. The thesis should be printed on both sides of the page. Double or one-and-a-half line spacing should be used in the body of the text. The preferred typeface is 12-point Times New Roman. Single spacing may be used for footnotes and indented quotations. Margins at the binding edge should be not less than 40mm and other margins not less than 20mm.

Title Page

The title should be an accurate and concise description of the contents of the thesis. The title page of each volume of the thesis should contain the following information:

- The full title of the thesis and the sub-title (if any)
- If there is more than one volume, the total number of volumes and the number of the particular volume
- The full name of the author (as recorded on his/her birth certificate) with, if desired, any qualifications or distinctions
- The award for which the thesis is submitted to the Institute.
- The name of the Institute.
- The name(s) of the supervisor(s) of the research
- As the last line on the page, the statement ‘Submitted to the Athlone Institute of Technology, (month) (year)’

Abstract

An abstract in English or Irish, not exceeding 300 words or one page in length, should be bound as an integral part of the thesis and should precede the main text. The abstract should be printed in single spacing and should indicate the author and title of the thesis in the form of a heading. A separate copy of the abstract should accompany the electronic copy of the submitted thesis. The abstract should provide a synopsis of the thesis and should state clearly the nature and scope of the research undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated. The abstract should include a brief statement, where appropriate, of the method of investigation used, an outline of the major divisions or principal arguments of the work and a summary of any conclusions reached.
Declaration
When submitting a thesis, the author should indicate in a declaration any material contained in the thesis that he or she has used before or has had published. If the thesis is based on joint research, the nature and extent of the author’s individual contribution should be indicated. The declaration should immediately follow the abstract.

Acknowledgements
Acknowledgements are given on the page following the declaration and should be confined to persons or institutions that have contributed to the work.

Table of Contents
The table of contents follows the acknowledgements page. While the categories can vary depending on the nature of the thesis, (A master’s thesis must be submitted as a monograph. A doctoral thesis can be submitted in either monograph or article-based format). The table of contents should be set out as defined in Appendix 2 of the research regulations. Students are advised to check with their department for any specifications that may be stipulated by that department.

Tables and Illustrated Material
Photographs, maps, graphs and other statistical tables that cannot be electronically added to the thesis should be mounted where they appear in the text. Bindery services should be advised when a thesis contains material of this kind. Maps or diagrams larger than A4 must be folded well inside the front edge of the thesis. The lists of tables and illustrations should follow the table of contents and should list all tables, photographs, diagrams etc. in the order in which they occur in the text.

Abbreviations
Abbreviations may be used at the discretion of the author and, when used, a key should be provided. In the case of an abbreviation not in common use, the term should be given in full at the first instance, followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

Pre-publication, Copyright and Intellectual Property
Copyright and other intellectual property (IP) regulations are specified in the Research Regulations. It is important that issues relating to IP and publishers’ copyright are resolved before the thesis is submitted. Accordingly, candidates are required to obtain from copyright holders (normally the publisher) permission to republish their already published work and to include in an appendix a declaration stating that permission has been granted. Candidates must agree with their primary supervisor(s) the final content of the thesis, including the number of published papers and any externally funded contractual obligations, including IP and confidentiality issues that may pertain to the underpinning research.

The library will retain its copies of the thesis and will make these copies available for consultation, in the library and the Institutional repository, in accordance with normal academic library practice and subject to the following:

- In cases where the material in the thesis is confidential or proprietary, the internal and external examiner(s) are required to sign a non-disclosure undertaking in respect of the material comprising the thesis.
• The primary supervisor should advise the Graduate School in regard to the basis on which access to the thesis for purposes of research may be given to third parties.

The library will make provision for the inclusion of a description and abstract of the thesis in appropriate directories of abstracts for reference by the international academic community. In cases where the material in the thesis has been deemed to be confidential or proprietary, the library shall embargo access to both the hard-bound and electronic copies of the thesis for a specified time after they have been lodged in the library. This embargo will cease after five years but may be extended on request to the Graduate School Research Committee. A hard-bound and electronic copy of the final version of each thesis completed at Athlone Institute of Technology must be deposited in the library in the interest of academic and historical scholarship.

**Bibliography**

Theses submitted for any higher degree by research shall contain a full bibliography.

**The Viva Voce Examination**

The following outlines the composition and role of the examination board and the purpose, processes and procedures pertaining to the viva voce examination for PhD candidates at the Institute; cognisance should be made of the research regulations as the definitive process.

**Composition and role of the examination board**

The board will normally consist of an independent chairperson and two examiners, one of whom will be internal to the Institute and the other external (in instances where the candidate is a staff member a second external examiner replaces the internal examiner). The chairperson will normally be an Institute faculty member who holds a PhD or has supervised a PhD candidate to completion.

The independent chairperson and the examiners will have been nominated on the Intention to Present Form, and approved by the Graduate School Research Committee. When the independent chair and the examiners are being nominated, due cognisance should be taken of any potential conflicts of interest, including those of a personal, research or professional nature. The viva voce examinations are administered and organised by the relevant academic faculty/department.

**Role of the independent chairperson**

The independent chairperson’s role is to manage the viva voce examination, ensuring that the candidate is treated fairly, to provide guidance on the Institute’s research regulations and procedures and communicate the outcome of the examination to the candidate and the relevant parties. The chairperson is required to submit his/her report to the Graduate School. The chairperson shall not have been involved in the research, and shall fulfil the supervisory requirements set out in the Research Regulations. The Chairperson will not question the candidate nor give opinion to the examiners on the research presented.

**Role of the External Examiner**

The external examiner will normally hold a PhD or have supervised a PhD Candidate to completion (a minimum of a Masters if a master’s viva voce is required). The Examiner will be an acknowledged expert in the field of study covered by the thesis and will usually hold a position as a senior lecturer or professor, or an equivalent position in an appropriate education establishment, research Institute or professional body. The examiner is required to be familiar with academic standards for PhDs within the area of the candidate’s research. The external examiner will, together with internal examiner, carry
out a detailed oral examination of the candidate and provide a written academic assessment as the requirements of the research regulations

**Role of the Internal Examiner**

The internal examiner will normally hold a PhD or have supervised a PhD Candidate to completion (a minimum of a Masters if a master’s viva voce is required) and have had no influence on the research work or candidate. The Examiner will have relevant expertise in the field of study covered by the thesis. The internal examiner has an important role in the examination process both as an examiner and, if required, after the examination as an advisor to the candidate on minor corrections or amendments. The internal examiner will be required to confirm in writing to the Graduate School that any corrections have been made to the required standard.

**Role of the supervisor(s)**

The supervisor may attend the examination, subject to the agreement of the candidate and approval of the examiners and chairperson, but may not examine or question the candidate and should only provide clarification of any matters when requested by the board. The supervisor does not participate in the final decision and should leave the examination while such deliberations take place, unless asked to remain by the chairperson.

**Purpose and format of the viva voce examination**

**Prior to the Examination:**

Prior to the viva voce examination, the external and internal examiners should have submitted independent pre-viva reports to the Chairperson via the Graduate School. These reports will form the basis of the final examination report.

**Purpose of the examination:**

- To allow the candidate to defend the originality of the thesis
- To establish that the work is publishable in whole or in part
- To expand and clarify the candidate’s ideas
- To establish that the research has been carried out independently by the candidate
- To test the authenticity of the research and writing
- To determine the candidate’s depth of knowledge and understanding of the field of study and of the literature
- To examine the conceptual approach, research methods and techniques used in the thesis
- To examine what was learnt and whether new knowledge was generated
- To consider the candidate’s ability to communicate his or her subject and to defend the research
- To give advice on changes, future direction and possible publication

**Format of the examination:**

PhD candidates are required to defend their thesis in response to issues raised by the examiners. The chairperson prior to the examination and in consultation with the examiners will determine the order of questions and the overall format of the examination. Candidates may be asked by the chairperson to briefly introduce their research and summarise their main findings and should be prepared to do so (usually a 20-minute presentation of the objectives, methods, main findings and conclusions of the work). At the end of the viva voce the candidate and the supervisor will be asked to leave the room while the board deliberates on the outcome. They will normally be called back and informed by the chairperson of the outcome of the examination. Candidates must not contact their examiners prior to
the viva voce examination. When the examination board has been constituted, all further communication by either the candidate or the supervisor(s) with the external examiner(s) shall be made through the chairperson.

**Length**

The length of the viva voce examination may vary in accordance with different disciplinary practices and will depend on the examiners’ requirements. As a guideline it should normally be in the range of one hour and a maximum of three hours. The chairperson should be aware of the demeanour of the candidate and offer breaks in the proceedings as necessary.

**Location**

The viva voce will normally be conducted at Athlone Institute of Technology unless prior written permission is sought and obtained from the head of department. In exceptional circumstances video/web conferencing may be used subject to agreement between all those involved in the examination, including the candidate.

**Outcome**

At the conclusion of the viva the board will decide on the outcome and determine the final recommendations. Following the board’s deliberations, the chairperson will normally ask the candidate and supervisor into the room and verbally inform the candidate of the outcome of the examination and the recommendation of the board, subject to agreement by Academic Council. Candidates may be verbally advised of any required revisions and/or corrections, or additional work. They will be informed that any additional requirements will be communicated to them in writing by the internal examiner in consultation with the supervisor(s). Following the viva, a joint written report should be prepared and agreed by the examiners and submitted by the chairperson. This report should be sent to the Graduate School as soon as possible, but no later than one week after the examination. If requested, the Graduate School will forward a copy of the final report to the student, supervisor, head of department and dean of faculty, together with a note of any additional requirements.

**Disagreements among examiners**

If a disagreement arises among the examiners, the chairperson is required to clarify and, where possible, reconcile differing viewpoints. If this is not possible, the examiners should submit separate reports to the Graduate School, and the matter will be referred to the Graduate School Research Committee for adjudication. In exceptional circumstances an additional external examiner may be asked to adjudicate.

**Right of appeal**

An appeal against the examiners’ decision cannot be made. If the candidate wishes to appeal on the grounds of process, the Vice President Academic and Registrar shall seek the Academic Council’s permission to withhold the name of the candidate and the examiners’ report until after the hearing of the appeal.
Resources

Computing and Information Technology Resources

The Institute has invested heavily in updating its computer facilities. AIT seeks to promote and facilitate the proper and extensive use of computing/IT in the interests of teaching, learning and research. Whilst the traditions of academic freedom are fully respected, there is also a requirement for responsible and legal use of the technologies and facilities made available to students and staff. Each department provides students with the opportunity to become familiar with computer technology relevant to their subject area.

The Information Technology Centre (ITC) is a centralised service available to all students within the Institute. Currently, there are eight general purpose laboratories consisting of 250 modern personal computers linked by file servers using an Ethernet network and Window XP operating system. All classrooms and laboratories contain LCD projection systems for assisting teaching and learning.

For project and research work, the Institute provides a 120-seat open access area for students and an additional 20-seat open access area has been established in the library. For students with special needs, a 15-seat assistive technology laboratory is available and located centrally. All workstations in this laboratory have up-to-date scanners attached and all are on electronic adjustable tables. We provide alternative keyboards, mice, touch screens, MP3 players, digital Dictaphones, a book edge scanner is also available. These students are also provided with laptops where necessary.

Students within the Institute have access to industry-standard hardware and software (database, word-processing, accounting spreadsheets, statistics, CAD, hotel administration, graphics, programming, etc). The Institute Computer Services Department uses a smart card printing system to enhance student reprographics for both printing and photocopying.

Professional Development

The Learning and Teaching Unit comprises of a cross disciplinary team with a high quality skills set, working as educational developers and learning technologists with representation from all faculties in the institute. Since its establishment in 2006, the unit has been committed to providing opportunities for staff, researchers and external participants to engage in professional development. Significant progress, as has been made in the professional development in learning, teaching and assessment particularly through the provision of a flexible pathway to a postgraduate award. The Learning and Teaching Unit provides formal and informal training for staff and researcher students, assistance with programme design and review, in addition to supporting the flexible delivery of programmes.

AIT has espoused a commitment to excellence in learning and teaching in the current and preceding strategic plan for the institute, in order to ensure that AIT graduates at undergraduate and postgraduate level are developing the requisite knowledge, skills and competences for their discipline and programme of study including digital literacy skills. The unit is committed to promoting active learning strategies to engage learners in addition to the use of appropriate authentic assessment strategies which allow students receive timely feedback, improve the quality of learning and provide appropriate evidence of achievement. The unit works collaboratively to foster academic integrity.
Technology Enhanced Learning – developing digital literacies

The current strategic plan of the institute the unit promotes the use of technology to enhance the learning experience of students. In particular, the use of digital technologies is encouraged including virtual learning environment (VLE), which offers opportunities for online learning and assessment. In addition, the unit has spearheaded the use of innovative technologies to enhance and monitor the student learning experience while on placement. The unit is also committed to developing expertise in the use of other technologies for education, such as web-authoring, screen recording, the online classroom and collaborative tools.

Educational Research and Scholarship

The Learning and Teaching Unit is committed to recognising the value of educational research to inform practice and contribute to the teaching of specific disciplines and the advancement of the scholarship of teaching in the broadest sense. The unit supports and encourages staff in dissemination locally through the annual Learning and Teaching showcase, in addition to external national and international conferences and symposia. The unit has collaborated in and led nationally funded educational research projects. The L&T Unit team is also committed to supporting institute working groups and committees of Academic Council related to quality enhancement in learning, teaching and assessment.

Support Services

Student Services Department

Athlone Institute of Technology has a comprehensive support system in place to facilitate and assist all of its students. This support system encompasses a variety of expertise and seeks to accommodate the wide and complex variation of challenges that students face whilst engaging in third level education. All students have electronic access to the Institute Student Handbook which they are encouraged to download and provide details of the various services (academic and non-academic) offered by AIT. The AIT Student Services Department aims to facilitate the work of all lecturers and tutors in supporting students throughout the institute. It provides services such as chaplaincy, counselling, careers advice, health, disability support, financial support and liaison with other external agencies as appropriate. This is the first port of call for students seeking information and help on any aspect of Institute life. If a student's needs cannot be met at this office, a referral will be offered to the appropriate person or agency. The Student Services Department sponsor a student-mentorship programme through which each student may avail of support from a peer. This is an innovative and valuable support, advice and guidance system and is cherished by the student body generally. Some students may require additional supports or reasonable accommodation In order for a student to avail of appropriate resources they must have declared their disability to the AIT Disability Officer. They are then afforded support and reasonable accommodation in line with the AHEAD Guidelines (AHEAD, 2012).

Further details of the services provided are as follows:

Academic Writing Centre: The Academic Writing Centre provides support to all students when faced with challenges in academic writing. International students encounter difficulty with writing their first assignment and the fact that there is a drop in centre is a great benefit to students. Lecturers are available to deliver group sessions or individual appointments can be arranged with the tutor based at Student Resources.

Chaplaincy services: The overall objective of the chaplaincy service is to make Institute life as meaningful and as enjoyable as possible and to create a spirit of cooperation and personal care. An emergency service is provided in the event of sudden illness, family or personal problems. Students are
invited to visit the residence outside working hours and volunteers to assist with the running of the services are always welcome. Interdenominational services are celebrated each month and a special purpose room is available for prayer and meditation.

**Counselling service:** The counselling service supports the mission of the Institute by providing help and support for students who are experiencing difficulties. The Institute Counsellors, provide a comprehensive service to students to help them cope or resolve difficulties. A male and female counsellor can advise international students.

**Health service:** A confidential health and medical service under the direction of the Institute Nurse is available in the Institute. The health centre provides a full medical service and advises students on all health-related matters. Male and female GPs attend at the Institute each day at times which are published within the Institute. The International Office assists Non-EU students with organising private medical insurance.

**Banking service:** A full banking service is available on the main campus. There is also an ATM in the Institute. International Students can open a bank account on registering at the Institute with banking online services.

**Careers and Appointments services:** The role of the Careers’ Service combines careers advisory work with students and facilities for employers to come into direct contact with students for recruitment purposes. The Careers Office can provide students with information on the following:

1. Further study opportunities and transferring to other colleges, both within Ireland and overseas
2. Career counselling to facilitate students to know, and evaluate, the many possibilities available, such as:
   - Compiling CVs and cover letters
   - Interview techniques and mock interviews
   - Employer Graduate Recruitment Programme and annual Careers Fair
   - Job opportunities - Mail-shot circulation of job vacancies
   - Employer presentations and interviews
   - Career videos
   - Employers’ information
   - Postgraduate opportunities
   - Information on scholarships
   - Information on recognised training courses
   - Work placements and Summer Work
   - Travelling and Working Abroad

**Dining facilities:** Restaurant/canteen facilities are available at the main campus and East Campus. The student restaurant(s) and the coffee dock provide a practical and social hub where students and staff from different faculties and departments integrate. The main canteen is open from 8.30 am to 9.00 pm Monday to Friday. The menu varies to suit international tastes e.g. Halal and vegetarian menu provided.

**Fitness Suite:** This is a facility available to students of the Institute to help them enjoy health and fitness in style and comfort. The fitness suite is situated upstairs from the student social centre and is open for use by students and staff members.

**Sport and Recreation:** The Institute is one of the leading third-Level institutions in the provision of sport and recreation programmes and services to its students. Different interests and all Levels of ability are catered for to ensure maximum participation. The Institute’s facilities include playing pitches and a multipurpose centre which contains a basketball court, four badminton courts, two volleyball courts, indoor soccer, and state-of-the-art sports arena. Students can avail of spinning and coaching sessions at
the indoor arena. There is also an outdoor athletics track. Students may also avail of various other local
facilities. The Regional Sports Centre, located near the town centre, comprises a 25m swimming pool,
children's pool, sauna & steam room, jacuzzi, fitness gym, crèche, café, FIFA standard astro-turf pitch
and a sports hall. The Institute has a large number of successful clubs and societies, funded through the
capitation funds provided there is an adequate membership. These include the following:

**Sports Clubs:** Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Camóige, Canoeing, Equestrian, Gaelic Football, Golf,
Handball, Hill Walking, Hockey, Hurling, Indoor Football, Karate, Orienteering, Rugby-Men’s,
Rugby-Ladies, Sailing, Soccer, Sub-Aqua, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tag Rugby, Tennis, Volleyball.

**Societies:** Accountancy, Applied Social Studies, Apprentices, Arts, Business Studies, Catering,
Chaplaincy, Civil/Construction, Computer, Computer Careers, Cumann Gaelach, Debating Society,
Electronics, Film/Audio Visual, Green Society, Horse Racing, International Society, Asian Society,
Brazilian Society, Mature Students, Mechanical Engineering, Irish Dancing, Music, Poetry,
Postgraduate (Research), Science, Software, Social Studies, St. Vincent de Paul, Tourism.

**Additional Support Services to International Students**
The International Office acts as a centralised point of contact for all international students, particularly
during the orientation period at the start of programme in September. The International Office has six
full-time staff and Irish and international postgraduate students assist during the orientation programme
in September. The International Office provides support services to all international students registered
at the Institute and co-ordinates host programmes for incoming students and academic staff. The
following support services are of particular relevance to international students:

**Airport collection and orientation:** The International Office will organise airport collection on arrival
in Dublin at no fee to international students and assists the student in securing suitable accommodation
in Athlone. A three-day orientation programme is organised by the International Office in September
to familiarise new students with college life in Athlone. Appointments with the Immigration Officer
in Athlone are organised for all Non-EU students within two weeks of arrival at the Institute.

**English Language and Tutorial Support:** English language classes are organised to assist international
students during their study. These classes are timetabled in addition to hours for registered programme
of study. Students who are experiencing language difficulties in their programme of study can meet
with a tutor to provide assistance outside of normal class contact hours. There is no fee for English
support classes.

**Internet Connection and Wireless Connection Cards:** The IT rooms at AIT are open from 9am to 10pm.
International Students can use PCs with characters in their native language or electronic translators are
also available. Students can register to access the internet using wireless connection at many
recreational areas of the campus. A new student hub with excellent Wi-Fi connection opened in
February 2015. This is very important to international students who like to keep in touch with family
and friends at home by Facebook, Skype and other means of connectivity.

**International Society:** The International Society was launched in September 2000 with the aim of
integrating international students into the student community at the Institute. A number of cultural
events are held during the academic year which to encourage integration of international and Irish
Students in a recreational space.

**Library**
The Athlone Institute of Technology Library has both a physical and virtual presence. The physical
libraries are located on the Institute’s two campuses. The Principle library is located in the main West
campus and the Nursing Library Annex in the East campus. The AIT Virtual Library provides for 24/7
365 days a year access to a range of online resources and library supports and specialist subject Library Guides.

**Resources**
The library provides access to a range of resources, the physical collection holds 25,000 titles, access to 500 e-books and 37 databases. There are currently 350 reading spaces combined in the libraries; a computer laboratory and three group study rooms. The computer laboratory and group study rooms are available for booking. Students have a range of self-booking options for PC’s, printers, book loans and logging of IT issues.

**Liaison Librarians**
Each school possesses dedicated Liaison Librarian. Research support, information literacy and training are provided by library staff. The Liaison works closely with the school to ensure a balanced and representative collection. The library policy is to provide customized ‘Point of Need’ library services including library information sessions in lecture halls and online query services via email.

There are a number of ways to seek help in the library,
- Face to face (at the library desk for general queries and loans)
- Via the ASK-A-LIBRARIAN service (email query service)
- Information Sessions organised via Lecturers
- Online help via website at: https://library.ait.ie/
- Generic library training sessions which occur on a regular basis (check website for details)
- Information literacy outreach to lecturers and staff including regular demonstrations of databases and individualized tutorials as necessary.

**Researcher Support**
Library staff are experienced in the areas of research data management, research support, grant applications as well as support for Academic writing. The AIT Institutional repository is in initial development stage and this will support all research activities of AIT. Advice is available for research promotion, dissemination and research profile management.

**Careers**
The Careers Office is in the business of helping students put their best foot forward when it comes to deciding on your next steps and planning your future. The careers office provides a vital link to industry with weekly updated job opportunities on the main AIT website for graduates, employer presentations and an Annual Career and Post Graduate Study Expo. Students are also offered ample opportunity to fine tune their job hunting skills with career bootcamps, linked-In workshops, in-class presentations and one-to-one career and further study guidance for students. Students can drop in with general career-related queries or to make an appointment to see the Careers Officer. Job vacancies are updated through this office on a weekly basis on the main AIT website.

**Student union**
The Students’ Union is made up of three elected student representatives. Elections for the positions take place annually. They provide support, advice and information on a wide variety of issues, and represent students throughout the Institute. It is an organisation run by students to cater for students’ needs. The day-to-day running of the union is carried out by the Executive Committee. The SU, as it is known also organises a large variety of social events for students within the Institute. The overall
policy and direction of the Students’ Union is decided by students, at Union General Meetings and at Class Rep Council meetings.

**Useful contact numbers**

A list of useful contact numbers can be found on the AIT website.

**Useful websites**

**Useful links**

Institute website:  [www.ait.ie](http://www.ait.ie)


Institute’s Examination, Regulations and Procedures document: [https://www.ait.ie/life-at.../examinations/exam-procedures-regulations](https://www.ait.ie/life-at.../examinations/exam-procedures-regulations)


Institute’s accreditation of prior learning policy. [www.ait.ie/faculties/department-of.../learning/prior-learning](http://www.ait.ie/faculties/department-of.../learning/prior-learning)


Appendix 1 Criteria for Postgraduate Research Awards

CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTERS

The qualifications available to students are Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Business and Master of Engineering.

The overall standard at level 9 of the framework is established in the following quotation ‘Learning outcomes at this level relate to the demonstration of knowledge and understanding which is the forefront of a field of learning. The outcomes relate to the application of knowledge, understanding and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar contexts related to a field of study. The outcomes are associated with an ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgements. Outcomes associated with level 9 would link with employment as a senior professional or manager with responsibility for the work outputs of teams.’

Examiners are required to assess the candidate using the thesis as evidence and satisfy themselves that the candidate has attained the standard. The examiners are required to report under each of the eight learning outcome strands (knowledge, skill and competence) described in the standard. To recommend the award the examiners must be convinced that the candidate has attained all of the outcomes. The examiners, in cases of doubt, may request a viva voce.

Standard to be attained by the candidate:

Examiners should assess and may recommend the award of Degree of Master (Research) in accordance with the following general criteria.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title Name</th>
<th>Master’s Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Arts (MA) / Master of Science (MSc) / Master of Business (MBus) / Master of Engineering (MEng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge – breadth</td>
<td>A systematic understanding of knowledge at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge – kind</td>
<td>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know-how and skill – range</td>
<td>Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know-how and skill – selectivity</td>
<td>Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – context</td>
<td>Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – role</td>
<td>Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – learning to learn</td>
<td>Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – insight</td>
<td>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression &amp; Transfer</td>
<td>Progression to programmes leading to Doctoral Degree (Award-type O), or to another Master’s Degree or to a Post-graduate Diploma (Award-types M or N).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

The overall standard at level 10 of the framework is established in the following quotation ‘Learning outcomes at this level relate to the discovery and development of new knowledge and skills and delivering findings at the frontiers of knowledge and application. Further outcomes at this level relate to specialist skills and transferable skills required for managing such as the abilities to critique and develop organisational structures and initiate change.’
Examiners are required to assess the candidate (viva voce) using the thesis as evidence and satisfy themselves that the candidate has attained the standard for the award.

The examiners are required to report under each of the eight learning outcome strands (knowledge, skill and competence) described in the standard.

**Standard to be attained by the candidate**

Examiners should assess and may recommend the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in accordance with the following general criteria.

---

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Doctoral Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctor in Philosophy (PhD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Purpose | The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training. |
| Level   | 10 |
| Volume  | Large |
| Knowledge – breadth | A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning |
| Knowledge – kind | The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers |
| Know-how and skill – range | Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials |
| Know-how and skill – selectivity | Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge |
| Competence – context | Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts |
| Competence – role | Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence – learning to learn</th>
<th>Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence – insight</td>
<td>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>