### English language Entry Requirements

(i) IELTS requirement amended to a minimum of 6.0 (not 6.1) with no component score less than 6.0

(ii) Two additional tests added – PTE and OET.

(b) Minor change in Appendix 3 – Section 4.3 changed to Appendix 5, Table 2
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1. **Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations**

1.1 **Introduction**

1.1.1 In addition to these regulations, research postgraduate students and their supervisors are referred to the general Standards, Assessments and Awards document and other codes of practice available on the Institutes website.

1.1.2 The academic regulations detailed hereunder shall apply to all postgraduate studies undertaken by a research and thesis mode at Athlone Institute of Technology. The regulations apply in each faculty and department of the Institute. In cases of any differences between these regulations and other documents, these regulations will supersede any other documents.

1.1.3 The Academic Council may approve changes to these regulations from time to time. The updated regulations will apply from the date of their approval and are available in electronic format at [https://www.ait.ie/life-at-ait/registry/student-policies](https://www.ait.ie/life-at-ait/registry/student-policies).

1.1.4 An individual faculty of the Institute may stipulate specific regulatory requirements over and above those specified herewith, insofar as such proposed additional requirements do not in any way conflict with or compromise the Institute regulations detailed below. Such additional requirements may be implemented in conjunction with these regulations by the faculty concerned and only that faculty provided the requirement(s) are approved by the Academic Council, and are clearly communicated to both supervisors and research students. The requirements may only be rescinded by a decision of the Academic Council. Specific regulations of this format will be kept by the registrar’s office.

1.1.5 A number of references are made throughout these regulations to the completion of Postgraduate Research forms. The forms underpin the postgraduate process from admission to graduation. The forms are available at [www.ait.ie/graduateschool](http://www.ait.ie/graduateschool)

1.1.6 Research postgraduate students will be expected to develop and maintain an individual student plan (ISP) which sets goals and time lines for delivery of targets. The plan will also include a record of generic and transferable skills programmes completed. It will be agreed and signed by both the student and supervisor(s).

1.2 **Higher Degrees**

1.2.1 Athlone Institute of Technology/QQI provides opportunities for the study and submission of research postgraduate degrees as follows:

- Master of Arts (M.A)
- Master of Business (M.BS.)
- Master of Engineering (M.Eng)
- Master of Science (M.Sc)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (submission by monograph or publication App’ 2)

1.2.2 To qualify for a higher degree by research, students must be registered with Athlone Institute of Technology for the minimum lengths of time specified by the regulations in section 1.8 below.

1.2.3 All students must pay the relevant fees for the duration of study and any continuation fee if these times are exceeded. Failure to adhere to fee payment will result in the research student not progressing and/or the withholding of any exit award.
1.2.4 All higher degrees by research and thesis awarded by Athlone Institute of Technology/QQI are deemed to be honours awards without classification.

1.2.5 Candidates for higher degrees must meet the requirements and hold the academic qualifications outlined below. These qualifications must have been obtained from Athlone Institute of Technology or from another institution or awarding body that is acceptable to Athlone Institute of Technology for this purpose.

1.3 Applications

1.3.1 Candidates who are interested in pursuing a postgraduate research award at the Institute should contact, the relevant Dean of faculty/Head of department/Director of research Institute or academic staff member in the relevant discipline area, to determine the current available opportunities. Completed Applications (Form GS1) are submitted in the first instance to the Graduate School.

1.3.2 Candidates who are successful in obtaining funding via the Presidents seed fund, external national or international funding agencies as advertised by Athlone Institute of Technology, must ensure that the funding covers the relevant fees of the Institute. Gaining funding does not exempt students from the requirements of these regulations nor guarantees an exit award.

1.3.3 The Institute is not responsible for funding the research requirements, fees or living expenses of any registered research student.

1.3.4 Candidates for higher degrees may be required to participate in an interview in order to determine their ability to carry out the proposed postgraduate research and the suitability of the proposed topic.

1.3.5 All candidates must provide certified confirmation of their qualification or results that will lead to an award. If the qualification/results are in a language other than English, a certified English language translation of the award/results must be provided. If the candidate’s primary language is not English, he/she must have completed a primary or a master’s degree through the medium of English or submit the official results of an English proficiency test as per the requirements specified in the table below. The Institute may consider English proficiency tests other than those listed in the table as meeting the English language requirements for pursuing a higher degree at the Institute.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Required Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Testing System</td>
<td>Must have a minimum of 6.0 with no component score less than 6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>Test of English as a Foreign Language</td>
<td>Paper based 550-580 Internet based 80-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>English Speakers of Other Languages (Cambridge tests)</td>
<td>CPE: C CAE A-C mainly C FCE where used A/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE</td>
<td>Pearson Test of English Academic</td>
<td>51-64 with a minimum of 55 in each section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OET</td>
<td>Occupational English Test</td>
<td>C, C, C (at least 250 in each component)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.6 The Graduate School Research Committee will consider recommendations from the Faculty Research Committee on all applications for entry to the masters and PhD registers.
1.4 Entry Requirements for Research Degrees

1.4.1 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.

1.4.2 The minimum requirements for entry to a research masters are as follows:

a. An honours primary bachelor’s degree with a minimum classification of 2.2 honours or equivalent qualification.

b. A postgraduate diploma equivalent to a 2.2 honours level 8 award.

1.4.3 The normal entry route for inclusion on the PhD registrar is transfer from the master’s register (Section 1.6.17), 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.

1.4.4 Persons who do not possess a primary bachelor’s degree may be considered for entry to the masters register as follows:

1.4.4.1 Persons whose prior experiential learning equips them adequately for entry to a master’s programme by research, including persons who have made a significant contribution in a field of study that falls within the ambit of disciplines catered for by Athlone Institute of Technology and whose contribution in their chosen field is evidenced by patents, publications, books, compositions, works of art, inventions or any other scholarly endeavours that may be deemed by Athlone Institute of Technology to be appropriate contributions to the particular field of study.

1.4.4.2 Persons who have a qualification other than a degree and who possess a substantial portfolio of industrial, artistic, commercial, laboratory, professional, teaching or research experience, usually developed over a period of not less than eight years, by virtue of which they could be deemed to be suitable entrants to a master’s research programme.

1.4.4.3 Applicants who fall into any one of the categories listed under 1.4.4 shall be considered in the first instance at the Faculty Research Committee followed by a recommendation to the Graduate School Research Committee. Recognition of Prior learning shall be considered within each relevant faculty.

1.4.4.4 Candidates approved under the process described in regulation 1.4.4.3 will be required to register for, and complete successfully, a master’s qualifying programme prior to formal progression to research master’s studies. The format and requirement of the programme will be agreed by the Graduate School Research Committee on the advice of the Faculty Research Committee.

1.4.5 Minimum requirement for a Masters Qualifying Programme.

1.4.5.1 The requirements listed in 1.4.5.2 to 1.4.5.6 shall apply to applicants approved for entry under regulation 1.4.4.

1.4.5.2 An applicant shall be required to register for and complete successfully the master’s qualifying programme prior to formal progression to the master’s register. This shall include, inter alia, the submission of a detailed research proposal that outlines the aims and objectives of the proposed
research, the methodologies to be used, the broad outcomes expected and a comprehensive literature review of the relevant field.

1.4.5.3 Applicants will be required to complete not more than 30 ECTS (which may be taught or project-based modules), selected by the proposed supervisor and approved as per 1.4.4.3. Any such modules shall, if possible, be taken over two semesters and shall be evenly distributed over the two semesters. The minimum score to be attained in the prescribed taught and project-based modules shall be 60%.

1.4.5.4 In appropriate cases, use should be made of current Athlone Institute of Technology undergraduate project modules as a means of assessing an applicant’s ability or potential to undertake research leading to a higher degree.

1.4.5.5 On successful completion of the provisions specified in 1.4.5.2 to 1.4.5.4, the Graduate School Research Committee shall approve the enrolment of the applicant for a master’s degree at Athlone Institute of Technology.

1.4.5.6 Should any ambiguity arise with regard to the regulations in section 1.4.5, the Vice President Academic shall adjudicate in consultation with the relevant executive Faculty Dean(s).

1.4.6 Entry Dates

1.4.6.1 Candidates enrol and register either in October or February of each academic year.

1.4.6.2 In exceptional cases a Candidate who is unable to enroll in September or February, will be enrolled on a pre-registration programme having applied to the Institute in the normal way. The time spent on this programme, will not disadvantage the candidate either by reducing or increasing the minimum enrolment period.

1.5 Supervisory Panel and Supervision

1.5.1 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 must reflect this.

1.5.2 The primary supervisor shall be:
   a. a permanent academic staff member of Athlone Institute of Technology faculty in which the research student is registered
   b. A full time academic staff member of Athlone Institute of Technology on a temporary contract of two years or greater, providing that the appointed co-supervisor(s) fulfil the regulation 1.5.2a. and will assume primary supervisor duties if the original primary supervisors contract ends.
   c. An active researcher in the broad area of the student’s topic, having a record of peer review publications of international standing and holding a doctoral degree, providing that the appointed co-supervisor(s) fulfil the regulation 1.5.2a. and will assume primary supervisor duties if the original primary supervisors becomes unavailable.

1.5.3 Primary supervisors will be qualified to the level of award sought by the candidate and will:
   a. Have prior experience as a postgraduate supervisor at the level of the award being sought
   b. Have appropriate expertise and be currently active in the area of the research being proposed
   c. Not be currently registered for a postgraduate research award in a cognate area and at the same level as the candidate
1.5.4 Subject to the condition of 1.5.2, the Co-supervisor(s) may be an Athlone Institute of Technology academic staff member, may be employed by another institution, or be industry based.

1.5.5 Co-supervisors should be specialists in the research area. Where a Co-supervisor is not a member of AIT academic staff, their CV indicating their qualifications, supervisory experience and any publications should be submitted with the candidate’s application, for approval by the Graduate School Research committee.

1.5.6 The Graduate School Research Committee, will on behalf of the Institute:

   a. Ensure that the research student to primary supervisor ratio does not exceed 3
   b. Review Research supervision arrangements where students successfully transfer from the Masters to PhD registers
   c. Propose changes if necessary to supervision arrangements were a research student isn’t performing
   d. Propose the appointment of alternative supervision arrangements to both faculty, and QQI if a supervisor becomes unavailable (e.g. Career break, maternity leave, retirement etc.) (form GS5)
   e. In exceptional circumstances allow deviation from regulation 1.5.5.a. for a maximum of 1 semester

1.5.7 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.

1.5.8 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. The candidate is responsible for registering for the taught modules.

1.5.9 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.

1.5.10 A student should make a complaint about the adequacy of supervision to the primary supervisor and the Head of Department in the first instance. 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.

1.5.11 Complaints about the adequacy of supervision will not be considered once the thesis has been presented for examination.

1.5.12 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.
1.6 Research Student Progression

1.6.1 Prior to the summer examination board, the registry will produce a broad sheet of all current research students for each faculty.

1.6.2 Each faculty shall convene a meeting of its Research Review Panel prior to the summer examination board, to review all the faculty’s research candidates. These panels will review the student submission and a progress report of each candidate’s work in a format to be agreed by each 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.

1.6.3 The Research Review Panel will consist of the supervisor(s), the Associate Dean of Research (ADR) who will act as chairperson, and at least one independent panel member, nominated by the Dean of Faculty, who satisfies the criteria of appointment of supervisor (as per section 1.5). The supervisor cannot act as chairperson of the Research Review Panel. Members of the Research Review Panel with the exception of the supervisor are not precluded to sit on the viva voce examination panel of non performing students.

1.6.4 Where the Associate Dean of Research (ADR) is a supervisor of the research student, the Dean of Faculty or his/her nominee will assume the role of chairperson and nominate the independent member to the panel.

1.6.5 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.

1.6.6 The Research Review Panel will assess the candidate’s performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation. The Panel’s recommendation shall be one of the following:

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)

which will be annotated on the supplied broad sheet. The Associate Dean of Research for the faculty will present the outcome of the review to the Graduate School Research Committee for approval, and subsequent presentation at the relevant exam board. Any deviation from the progression regulation must be requested at this point. Individual assessment of the research student will be submitted to the Graduate school on forms GS6.

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

1.6.8 Where the Research Review Panel is not satisfied that a student is performing to the appropriate level, the student will not progress at the summer exam board and be held in his/her current year of study.
1.6.9 Students deemed to be underperforming will be required to present their work at a viva voce examination, in the same format as the transfer from Masters to PhD examination (section 1.6.17), in time for the annual repeat exam board.

1.6.10 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 GS7 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

1.6.11 Candidates held on the register will still be liable for academic fees.

1.6.12 Candidates who do not attend or engage with the examination will be removed from the register.

1.6.13 The annual review process does not need to be undertaken by research students who have submitted a copy of their thesis for final examination. All other research students must undergo a review.

1.6.14 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.

1.6.15 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 GS7).

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

1.6.17 Transfer from Masters Register to PhD Register

1.6.17.1 Candidates on the research masters register who wish to transfer to the PhD register must undertake the masters transfer process prior to month 18 after registration. A transfer examination panel will be convened to enable students to meet this requirement.

1.6.17.2 The supervisor will complete the GS2 form and forward 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. The transfer document is a substantial statement of the progress and should follow the format indicated in Appendix 3.

1.6.17.3 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). External examiners will be appointed on the same basis as indicated in 1.14.10. The proposed panel will be nominated by the Dean of faculty and approved by the Graduate School Research committee.

1.6.17.4 A viva voce examination is a required as per 1.14.18.

1.6.17.5 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 masters 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 masters register and submit for the award when completed

1.6.17.6 The Chairperson will inform the candidate of the outcome of the viva and Regulation 1.6.18. The Chairperson will also inform the Graduate School of the outcome using form GS10.

1.6.17.7 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.

1.6.18 Research Progression Appeal
1.6.18.1 The grounds for appeal and the formal procedures for dealing with appeals are set out in Standards, Assessments and Awards (https://www.ait.ie/life-at-ait/registry/student-policies)

1.7 Location of Research
1.7.1 To qualify for a higher degree by research, students must be registered with Athlone Institute of Technology. The research may be carried out at Athlone Institute of Technology or at another location with the approval of the Graduate School Research Committee.

1.7.2 The Graduate School Research Committee must be satisfied that the candidate can attend Athlone Institute of Technology for such periods as are necessary for the adequate supervision of the research or that satisfactory arrangements are in place.

1.7.3 The Graduate School Research Committee must be satisfied that the candidate will have the relevant time, resources and supervision to complete the defined research at the off-campus location.

1.8 Periods of Registration
1.8.1 The minimum period of registration for a master’s degree by research is 18 months and for a PhD degree by research is three years. Where a student has been registered for research postgraduate studies at universities or institutions other than Athlone Institute of Technology, the Graduate School Research Committee shall determine the year of study the student enters the master’s or PhD programme subject to a minimum period of registration of one year at Athlone Institute of Technology.

1.8.2 Registration for part-time research may be permitted by Athlone Institute of Technology provided that candidates can attend the Institute for such periods as are necessary for adequate supervision. Permission for such part-time registration, setting out all the circumstances, must be made at the time of application. Research students on the full-time register who obtain other full-time employment after 18 months on the master’s degree register or three years on the PhD register may apply in writing to the Chair of the Graduate School Research Committee for transfer to the part-time register for the remainder of their registration. Such applications must have the written support of the supervisor. Where transfer is affected, the new time limits apply from the original date of full-time registration.

1.8.3 Students who do not present for examination in 4 years for a master’s award or 6 years for a PhD award will be required to re-register using GS4, subject to successfully completing the annual progression process. Annual fees as appropriate will apply. (https://www.ait.ie/life-at-ait/registry/Fees)
1.8.4 Where a research student is performing to the required level, but is likely to overrun the allowable time limit. They may apply to the Graduate School Research Committee with the approval of their supervisor for an extension of the time limit for a maximum of 1 year using Form GS4. The outcome of the review of the student’s circumstances will be forwarded to the student, and other relevant internal and external bodies as required (e.g. R&IE, funding bodies, QQI etc.)

1.9 Leave of Absence

1.9.1 In special circumstances e.g. financial, medical or personal reasons, but not academic; a student may be granted up to a period of one year’s leave of absence off the register, normally aligned to the academic semesters or year. Application should be made to the Graduate School Research Committee using Form GS8. Supervisors should indicate any academic, contractual or financial implications to the student when leave of absence is requested. In exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Graduate School Research Committee this period may be extended up to one year.

1.9.2 The outcome of the review of the student’s circumstances will be forwarded to the student, and other relevant internal and external bodies as required (e.g. R&IE, funding bodies, QQI etc.).

1.9.3 The student’s registration is deemed to be held at this point, and any time lapse will not count towards the minimum registration period required before submission. Fees for the period of leave of absence will not apply.

1.9.4 Prior to readmission to the PhD or Masters register, as applicable, the candidate must review in detail his/her work to date with his/her supervisor(s). Once Form GS9 has been completed and signed by the student, supervisor and Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Registrar’s office.

1.9.5 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 at a viva voce examination as per section 1.6.9. Once the revised research proposal has been agreed and the Research Postgraduate Readmission Form GS9 has been completed and signed by the candidate, supervisor(s) and the Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Registry.

1.9.6 In instances where the supervisory expertise in the original or new research area is unavailable, the Head of Department will recommend appropriate supervision arrangements to the Associate Dean Research on Form GS5. The recommendation will be reviewed for approval by the Faculty Research Committee, and the Graduate School Research Committee.

1.9.7 On resumption of his/her studies, a candidate who has completed the minimum registration period for their research degree must re-register and pay the appropriate fee for a minimum of one year before being allowed to submit for an award.

1.10 Generic and Transferable Skills Training

1.10.1 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.

1.10.2 All research students are required to complete a minimum of 15 ECTS credits of structured learning annually. Students on a masters must complete 35 ECTS credits of such learning by the
end of their programme of study. Students undertaking a PhD must complete 50 ECTS credits of such learning by the end of their programme of study.

1.10.3 The training requirements of students in addition to those in 1.10.2 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.

1.10.4 Records of the completion of individual training programmes should be noted by the student on their Individual study plan, and in the student record held by the Graduate School.

1.11 Research Ethics
1.11.1 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)

1.12 Thesis Specifications
1.12.1 The thesis must be presented and produced in accordance with Athlone Institute of Technology Procedures for the Preparation and Submission of Masters and Doctoral Theses (see Appendix 2).

1.12.2 The maximum permitted length for a master’s degree thesis is 60,000 words and for a PhD thesis is 100,000 words.

1.12.3 The thesis shall be written in English, Irish or another language subject to the provisions set out in Appendix 1, Presentation of Masters and Doctoral Theses in a Language Other Than English.

1.12.4 The practice of engaging professional editorial services is not permitted.

1.12.5 Athlone Institute of Technology recognises the importance of peer-reviewed publications and welcomes monograph-based or article-based theses for its research degrees. See Appendix 2.

1.13 Copyright and Intellectual Property
1.13.1 Copyright in the thesis resides with the candidate. All other intellectual property (including inventions, discoveries, copyright in computer software (including source and object codes) and other kinds of copyright, semiconductor mask works, trade secrets, know how, research data, tangible research property and similar property/rights) conceived, invented or reduced to practice by the candidate during, or as a result of, research undertaken at the Institute shall be the property of the Institute.

1.13.2 Institute policy with respect to ownership and exploitation of intellectual property is set out in the current AIT Intellectual Property Policy (to which the attention of the candidate is drawn generally), copies of which are available on the AIT website or from the Innovation and Enterprise Office. Benefits accruing to the Institute from the subsequent commercialisation of the intellectual property referred shall be allocated in accordance with such Policy.

1.14 Examination Procedures
1.14.1 A thesis submitted for a master’s degree must show evidence of independent enquiry and/or originality in either conclusions or method. A thesis submitted for a PhD degree must show evidence of independent enquiry, originality in the methods used and/or in the conclusions drawn and must make an appreciable new contribution to knowledge or thinking in the candidate’s field.
1.14.2 The candidate must obtain the agreement of his/her supervisor to submit the thesis for examination. The supervisor’s agreement that the thesis be submitted may not be taken by the candidate as an *a priori* judgement that the candidate will be successful in his/her examination.

1.14.3 In the event that his/her supervisor does not agree to the submission of the thesis for examination, the candidate shall have the right to appeal to the relevant Head of Department. If the thesis is not to be submitted, the supervisor should give reasons in writing to both the candidate and Head of Department (or the Associate Dean Research if the Head of Department is the supervisor). Following consultation with the relevant Associate Dean Research, the Head of Department may ask an independent arbitration panel, which shall comprise two members of academic staff, one from the department and one external to the department, to consider whether or not the thesis is worthy of external examination. The recommendation shall be final.

1.14.4 A research candidate who adheres to these regulations, and is ready to submit his/her thesis for examination must ask their supervisor to submit an “intention to present”. Form GS3 a minimum of **two months** in advance of the planned submission date.

1.14.5 The supervisor, or the candidate with written approval by the supervisor, shall submit the prescribed number of copies of the thesis to the Graduate School for examination at the agreed submission date.

1.14.6 The thesis must be accompanied by a statement, signed by the candidate, that the thesis represents the candidate’s own work or, in the case of a thesis based on a group project that indicates the extent of the individual’s contribution and makes reference to any other thesis submitted or material published by each collaborator in the project.

1.14.7 The candidate’s thesis shall be examined by an examination panel. Using the “intention to present” form, the supervisor, in conjunction with the relevant Head(s) of Department or Dean, shall nominate members of the Examination Panel to the Graduate School Research Committee for its approval. When nominating members of the Examination Panel, due cognisance should be taken of any potential conflicts of interest, including those of a personal, research or professional nature.

1.14.8 The Examination Panel for a master’s thesis will comprise of an internal examiner and an external examiner. Where the candidate is an Athlone Institute of Technology staff member, the internal examiner is replaced with a second external examiner. In the event that the external or internal examiner requests that a *viva voce* examination form part of the examination process or the examiners fail to agree, the Chair of the Graduate School Research Committee will request the Head of Department or Faculty Dean to nominate a chairperson to the Examination Panel subject to approval by the Postgraduate Research Committee. For examination panels that include a chairperson, the chairperson shall not have been involved in the research and shall fulfil the supervisory requirements set out in section 1.5.

1.14.9 The Examination Panel for a PhD thesis will comprise an internal examiner, an external examiner and the Head of Department or Faculty Dean, or his/her nominee, who will act as chairperson. Where the candidate is an Athlone Institute of Technology staff member, the internal examiner is replaced with a second external examiner.

1.14.10 The external examiner shall have a formal academic and/or professional qualification as well as expertise in the subject area and knowledge of the academic standards required for a PhD degree in the research area of the thesis being examined. In normal circumstances the External examiner would not have acted at the candidates transfer from the masters to PhD register. Evidence of these requirements and their supervision record should be included in the external examiner’s curriculum vitae, which accompanies the intention to present form.
1.14.11 A former member of Athlone Institute of Technology may not act as an external examiner within a period of four years from the date of their leaving the Institute.

1.14.12 The internal examiner shall be an academic staff member of Athlone Institute of Technology and hold an award equivalent or higher than the award being examined for.

1.14.13 Notwithstanding the provisions of 1.14.12, the Graduate School Research Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, approve the appointment of an internal examiner not meeting the requirements specified above.

1.14.14 Following Graduate School Research Committee approval, members of the Examination Panel shall be deemed appointed by the Academic Council.

1.14.15 An external examiner cannot examine more than two theses in any five-year period for Athlone Institute of Technology. This does not affect his/her role as external examiner on taught programmes. In exceptional circumstances, an appeal to allow the same external examiner to examine within the exclusion period can be made to the Vice President Academic.

1.14.16 Candidates must not contact the examiners once the intention to present form has been submitted.

1.14.17 Each examiner is required to assess the work and present an independent report to the chairman of the examination panel where a viva voce is required, or to the Graduate School if a viva voce is not required, within eight weeks of its receipt, in line with the criteria for the postgraduate research awards (Appendix 5).

1.14.18 A viva voce examination is a required element of the PhD examination process and may be a required element of the master’s examination process. Subject to the approval of the Graduate School Research Committee and in exceptional circumstances only, an alternative assessment instrument to the viva voce may be utilised. The format of the examination is the responsibility of the examiners. Taking the wishes of the candidate into account, the supervisor(s) may attend the viva voce examination with the agreement of the Examination Panel. When the supervisor(s) is not in attendance at the viva voce examination, s/he should be available for consultation, if required.

1.14.19 When the examination of the thesis, and where applicable, the viva voce have been concluded, the examiners (within 10 working days) shall submit to the Graduate School their reports. If a disagreement arises between the examiners recommendations the matter will be referred to the Vice President Academic Affairs. In exceptional circumstances, an additional external examiner may be asked to adjudicate.

1.14.20 The Examiners’ report must comment on the following areas:

- The overall standard and quality of research in the thesis
- The original contribution the thesis makes to knowledge and scholarship
- The writing style and overall presentation of the thesis
- The ability of the student to defend the research in the oral examination
- The nature of the amendments and/or corrections required
- Conclusion and award recommendation

1.14.21 The Examiners must make one of the following award recommendations on the appropriate GS form which accompanies the Examiner’s report:
a. Recommended
b. Recommended with minor revisions (to be completed within 3 months)
c. Recommended with major revisions (to be completed within 12 months)
d. Not recommended

1.14.22 In relation to the examiners’ recommendations 1.14.21c above, the external examiner must indicate in their report whether or not s/he wishes to review the thesis following the completion of the prescribed amendments. The candidate must undertake these amendments in conjunction with his/her supervisor(s) within the defined timeline.

1.14.23 In relation to the examiners’ recommendation 1.14.21b, 1.14.21c, above, the candidate must be informed, by means of an annotated copy of the thesis, a typed list or both, of the corrections and/or amendments that need to be made to attain the relevant degree. The candidate must undertake these corrections and/or amendments in conjunction with his/her supervisor(s) within the defined timelines.

1.14.24 In relation to the examiners’ recommendations 1.14.21b above, the internal examiner or, in the case of the candidate being an Athlone Institute of Technology staff member, one of the external examiners (agreed at the examination) must confirm in writing to the Graduate School that the required corrections have been made to a satisfactory standard with the statement that the degree of Masters/PhD should be awarded.

1.14.25 In relation to the examiners’ recommendation 1.14.21c above, the internal examiner and, if applicable in accordance with regulation 1.14.22, the external examiner must confirm in writing to the Graduate School that the required amendments have been made to a satisfactory standard with the statement that the degree of Masters/PhD should be awarded.

1.14.26 In relation to the examiners’ recommendation 1.14.21c above in the case of the candidate being an Athlone Institute of Technology staff member, one of the external examiners (agreed at the examination) must confirm in writing to the Graduate School that the required amendments have been made to a satisfactory standard with the statement that the degree of Masters/PhD should be awarded.

1.14.27 In relation to the examiners’ recommendations 1.14.21b, 1.14.21c, above, if a candidate does not resubmit the revised version of his/her thesis to the Graduate School within the prescribed time period, the examination process will be deemed to be concluded. Thus, the candidate’s enrolment will continue on the relevant register.

1.14.28 In relation to the examiners’ recommendation 1.14.21d above, where the candidate continues on the relevant register, the examination process will be deemed to be concluded. In due course and with the supervisor’s agreement, the candidate will be required to commence a new examination process as per section 1.14. In this case, in so far as is possible, the same examination panel will be used.

1.14.29 In relation to the examiners’ recommendation 1.14.21d following the submission to the Graduate School of the examiners’ report, which should provide a detailed review of the areas in which the thesis is deficient and a clear explanation as to why no degree shall be awarded, the examination process will be deemed to be concluded. The candidate’s enrolment will continue on the relevant register.
1.14.30 In exceptional circumstances (certified medical or personal reasons), a candidate may, prior to the expiration of the prescribed time periods specified in 1.14.21b,c, apply in writing to the chair of the Graduate School Research Committee for an extension to the aforementioned time periods. An extension may be granted for a maximum of three months. If the candidate does not resubmit within the extended time period, the examination process will be deemed to be concluded, and the candidate’s enrolment will continue on the relevant register.

1.14.31 A candidate cannot submit his/her master’s or PhD thesis for examination on more than two occasions.

1.14.32 Following the receipt of the external examiner(s) report(s), and the Graduate School having received the required number of amended hard copies of the thesis, AIT will issue a broadsheet of results, with the examiners’ recommendations being reported to the appropriate examination board for ratification at the next available opportunity. Where AIT has delegated authority for the award the registry will issue the AIT parchment for graduation. Where AIT has approval or accreditation but not delegated authority, the graduate School will forward the Examiners’ reports and broadsheet to QQI who will issue the relevant parchments.

1.14.33 Following ratification of the degree award by the Academic Council, one hard copy and one electronic copy of the thesis shall be forwarded by the Graduate School to Athlone Institute of Technology Library.

1.14.34 Whilst the successful candidate may be unofficially informed of the outcome of the examination, they may not utilise the award title until it has been ratified by the Institute.

1.15 Research Examination Appeals

1.15.1 Students who wish to appeal the recommendations of the examination board in relation to their results are advised that this should be done in accordance with the procedures and based on the conditions laid down in the Institutes Standards Assessments and Awards document, and in the Student Handbook.

1.16 Fees

1.16.1 All research candidates must be in good standing with Athlone Institute of Technology in regard to fees. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in the withholding of results/awards and/or the removal of the candidate from the register.

1.17 Review and Interpretation

1.17.1 The Vice President Academic Affairs and Registry shall ensure that all these regulations are implemented. In the event of any disagreement or conflict with regard to the implementation or interpretation of any or all of the regulations, the matter shall be referred to the Academic Council, and its ruling shall be final.

1.16.2 The foregoing regulations are subject to review as required by the Academic Council.
Appendix 1

**Presentation of Master’s and Doctoral Theses in a Language Other Than English**

1. Theses that constitute all or part of the requirement for the purposes of the award of a master’s or doctoral degree of Athlone Institute of Technology may be presented in English, Irish or another language.

2. Use of a language other than English for thesis preparation shall be subject to the availability of academic staff who are competent in the language concerned.

3. The Associate Dean Research of the faculty/faculties in which the postgraduate research is to be carried out shall be notified by the postgraduate student’s supervisor(s) of the intention to present the thesis in a language other than English, and the language concerned shall be specified prior to the commencement of the postgraduate studies.

4. The Associate Dean Research shall accordingly notify the Vice President Academic of the postgraduate student’s intention to present the thesis in a language other than English.

5. Where a postgraduate student, with the approval of his/her supervisor, proposes to present a thesis in a language other than English, the Institute must be satisfied that there are members of academic staff competent in the relevant language within the Institute who are capable of examining the thesis.

6. The Vice President Research shall ensure that the academic staff member being proposed as the internal supervisor/examiner is fully competent in the language in question.

7. As well as having appropriate expertise in the relevant field of study, the external examiner to be appointed shall be competent in the language in which the thesis is to be written.

8. In cases where the language of presentation is other than English, the choice of language for thesis presentation shall be determined by the postgraduate student’s supervisor(s) in consultation with the relevant Head(s) of Department and the relevant Associate Dean(s) Research.

9. An abstract in English or Irish shall accompany each of the three copies of the thesis that are lodged in the Graduate School for examination.

10. The library copy of the thesis shall be accompanied by a copy of the abstract in English or Irish.
Appendix 2

Requirements for the Preparation and Submission of Master’s and Doctoral Theses

A master’s thesis must be submitted as a monograph. A doctoral thesis can be submitted in either monograph or article-based format. Section 1 of this appendix presents the general requirements for the preparation and submission of a thesis. Section 2 presents the specific requirements for the preparation and submission of a monograph thesis (applicable to master’s and PhD theses). Section 3 presents the specific requirements for the preparation and submission of an article-based thesis (applicable to PhD theses only).

Only theses prepared in accordance with the requirements specified below are acceptable for the award of higher degrees by research at Athlone Institute of Technology. It is the responsibility of the internal and external examiners to ensure that theses are prepared in accordance with the specified requirements.

1. General Requirements

1.1 Number of Copies

1.1.1 The candidate is required to prepare two soft-bound copies of the thesis, which s/he must submit to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will forward one copy each to the internal examiner and external examiner.

1.1.2 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 hard-bound copy and one electronic copy of the thesis in Athlone Institute of Technology Glucksman Library and will send the other one hard-bound copy to the supervisor.

1.2 Language

1.2.1 The thesis shall be written in English, Irish or another language subject to the provisions set out in Appendix 1 of these regulations.

1.3 Format for Presentation

1.3.1 The thesis must be submitted on A4 white 80g/m² paper. The thesis must be printed on both sides of the page, and a 12-point, serif typeface must be used (e.g. Times New Roman).

1.3.2 Double or one-and-a-half line spacing must be used in the body of the text. Single spacing may be used for footnotes and indented quotations.

1.3.3 Margins at the binding edge must be not less than 40mm and the other margins not less than 20mm.

1.4 Pagination

1.4.1 Pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the text, including whole pages of photographs or diagrams. Where the thesis consists of more than one volume, the pagination should indicate the Arabic number of the volume as well as the page number of the particular volume.

1.4.2 Page numbers should be inserted at the bottom of the page and approximately 20mm above the edge of the page.

1.4.3 Appendix titles should be preceded by Appendix A or 1, Appendix B or 2 etc, as follows:
- Appendix A/1 Title of Appendix A/1
- Appendix B/2 Title of Appendix B/2
- Appendix C/3 Title of Appendix C/3
1.5 Title Page

1.5.1 The title page of each volume of the thesis should contain the following information:
   a. The full title of the thesis and the sub-title (if any)
   b. If there is more than one volume, the total number of volumes and the number of the particular volume
   c. The full name of the author (as recorded on his/her birth certificate) with, if desired, any qualifications or distinctions
   d. The award for which the thesis is submitted to the Institute.
   e. The name of the university. Where Athlone Institute of Technology logo is used at the top of the title page, it must conform to the AIT corporate specifications.
   f. The name(s) of the supervisor(s) of the research
   g. As the last line on the page, the statement ‘Submitted to Athlone Institute of Technology, (month) (year)’

1.6 Abstract of Thesis

1.6.1 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.

1.6.2 The abstract should be printed in single spacing and should indicate the author and title of the thesis in the form of a heading.

1.6.3 A separate copy of the abstract should accompany the electronic copy of the submitted thesis.

1.7 Length of Thesis

1.7.1 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.

1.7.2 The word counts are maxima, and it is expected that the majority of theses will be considerably shorter.

1.8 Presentation of References

1.8.1 References must follow consistently:
   a. The BS ISO 690:210 standard (currently under review, will be replaced by ISO/DIS 690). It forms the basis for the guidelines to AIT Harvard referencing style specified and supported by AIT Library in the Referencing Guide section of its website.
   or
   b. A recognised standard appropriate to the discipline and agreed with the supervisor.

1.9 Binding and Cover

1.9.1 The final version of the thesis must be securely bound within boards in such a way that sheets cannot be removed or replaced. Any photograph or diagram that is not reproduced integrally with the text should be fixed firmly in place. The boards should have sufficient rigidity to enable the thesis to stand upright on a shelf without other support. The binding should be such as to enable the pages to lie flat when the thesis is placed lying down and opened at any page. The colour of the cover boards for the final version of the thesis shall be black.

1.9.2 The front cover of the thesis must contain the following information only:
   a. The title of the thesis in at least 24-point (8mm) print
   b. The name of the candidate: one forename, other forenames initialised and the candidate’s surname
c. The award for which the thesis is submitted and the year of submission

d. Where the thesis consists of more than one volume, the volume number and the total number of volumes

1.9.3 The same information (excluding the title of the thesis) must be printed in at least 24-point (8mm) print along the spine of the cover in such a way as to be easily legible when the copy is lying flat with its front cover uppermost. All lettering on the cover and spine must be clearly legible.

1.10 Electronic Copy

1.10.1 The 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.

1.10.2 The file must be submitted on a portable data storage device, i.e., CD, memory stick, etc., together with the hard-bound copies.

1.11 Other Requirements

1.11.1 Athlone Institute of Technology will arrange appropriate and convenient access by the internal and external examiner(s) to such facilities as are required for the full and proper assessment of the thesis.

1.11.2 In the case of a thesis in which the development of computer software is a primary objective, the candidate’s supervisor, in consultation, as necessary, with the internal and external examiner(s), shall specify how such software is to be presented, and may specify any or all of the following forms:

a. On an appropriate storage medium or other relevant electronic format, as specified
b. By a working demonstration
c. Appropriate printouts or report produced by the software
d. Appropriate flowcharts and other system documentation
e. Any other appropriate form prescribed
f. Printed listing of source or other code. Such listings may consist of:
   (i) closely packed high-quality printed code, reduced and bound in with the thesis as an appendix on A4 paper
   (ii) normal listing bound separately as an appendix in good-quality standard computer binding
   (iii) such other form as may be specified
g. In the case of source code, the candidate may, with the prior approval of the supervisor and of the office of the Vice President Research, arrange that the code is listed and bound in such a way as to enable the confidentiality of the code to be preserved for a specified period following assessment of the programs by the examiners.
h. Where a full listing of source code is provided, the candidate must also provide sample test material to facilitate testing by another user.

1.11.3 In the case where a process or artefact (e.g., music composition or other work of fine art, machine, working model or prototype, sculpture, etc.) produced or developed by the candidate forms a significant part of the thesis or in the case of a research degree based on practice research, the Institute will arrange appropriate and convenient access to the process or artefact for the purposes of assessment by the internal and external examiner(s).

1.11.4 In all cases of presentation of theses under special arrangements as approved in accordance with paragraphs 1.11.2 and 1.11.3 above, the candidate must, in addition to whatever, if any, other documentary material forms part of the thesis, present a written account of the programme of work leading to the completion of the research. This account should be bound in with the other documentary material in accordance with the requirements specified above or, if there is no such material, should be presented separately in accordance with those requirements. Photographs, slides, films, tapes, disks or other permanent records relating to the thesis product should, where practicable, be similarly bound.
1.12 Pre-publication, Copyright and Intellectual Property

1.12.1 The candidate is encouraged to publish material before presenting the thesis. Reference to such published material should be listed in an appendix to the candidate’s thesis.

1.12.2 Copyright and other intellectual property (IP) regulations are specified in chapter 5, section 5.13. 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.

1.12.3 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.

1.12.4 The Library will retain its copies of the thesis and will make these copies available for consultation, in the library and on Athlone Institute of Technology Institutional Repository, in accordance with normal academic library practice and subject to 1.12.6 and 1.12.7 below.

1.12.5 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.

1.12.6 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.

1.12.7 The primary supervisor should advise the office of the Vice President Research with regard to the basis on which access to the thesis for purposes of research may be given to third parties.

1.12.8 In cases where the material in the thesis has been deemed to be confidential or proprietary by the Vice President Academic, 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 at the request of the Vice President Academic.

1.12.9 Notwithstanding paragraph 1.12.7, a hard-bound and electronic copy of the final version of each thesis completed in Athlone Institute of Technology must be deposited in the Library in the interest of academic and historical scholarship.

1.13 Submission and Presentation of Final Thesis to the Examination Board

1.13.1 The two copies of the final hard-bound thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School no fewer than five working days prior to the meeting of the Institute Examination Board that will recommend on the award to the candidate in question. The Chair of the Graduate School Research Committee will certify to the Examination Board that two hard-bound copies and one electronic copy of the thesis have been received.

2. Specific Requirements: Monograph Thesis

2.1 Monograph style is the conventional style in which theses are presented. The work is laid out in a series of chapters, typically following this structure: introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion and conclusions.

2.2 The following list shows a suggested structure for the presentation of material in a monograph thesis. Students are advised to check with their department for any specifications that may be stipulated by that department.

Title Page
Abstract

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 An article-based thesis comprises a number of interrelated but independent research articles (at least three and usually four or five) that are produced by the PhD candidate while registered as a research student.

3.1.2 As there are various academic conventions associated with each discipline in terms of (i) authorship; (ii) the minimum number of articles required; and (iii) the appropriate word count within published articles, some faculties or departments may have specific guidelines that must be adhered to by candidates who choose the article-based thesis format. Articles that are in draft form are excluded.

3.1.3 The articles must be published, pending publication or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals.

3.1.4 An article that is ‘pending publication’ is defined as an article that has been verified by a letter from the journal editor stating that the article has been accepted in a final form and is awaiting publication in a specified forthcoming issue/volume. The signed letter of verification must be included as an appendix in the thesis.

3.1.5 An article that is ‘accepted for publication’ is defined as an article that has been reviewed by the journal editor and deemed to be suitable for publication at a future date subject to minor corrections. A signed letter confirming the status of the article must be included as an appendix in the thesis.

3.1.6 Conference papers cannot be included. Publications that essentially report the same data or findings to separate readerships are considered as a single publication.

3.1.7 It is expected that the articles presented shall deal with the same research question or set of questions. The publications included in the thesis may include jointly written papers, although the candidate must normally be the principal author of a major part of the work. Disciplinary differences regarding policy on authorship will be respected.

3.1.8 The number of articles required will depend on the scope of the work and on the candidate’s contribution to them. In cases of multi-authored articles, in addition to the statement at the start of each chapter, candidates are required to provide a signed statement in an appendix specifying their
contribution to the work. The statement must be verified and signed by the primary supervisor(s) and principal co-authors.

3.1.9 Candidates should be the main author on at least 50% of the published work and should be able to demonstrate clearly in the thesis and examination that they are the primary investigator of the research findings. Joint and co-authorship is encouraged as a general principle. However, the publications should demonstrably be based on the candidate’s research and reflected through first authorship of at least half, and ideally the majority, of the publications.

3.2 Format and Presentation of the Article-based PhD

3.2.1 There should be a logical sequence to the thesis. While each chapter comprises a published article, the chapter must include a preamble and a statement of the contribution the candidate made to the publication (if there are more than one author – see no. 3.1.8 above). A concluding statement or discussion that leads the reader to the next article should be added to the end of the chapter.

3.2.2 The articles should be presented in manuscript format and not as journal-ready files, such as the PDF file with full journal formatting. Full citation details for the work must be provided, including a URL link to the journal and ISSN number, where appropriate. (The inclusion of copies of final-format PDFs of the published work in an appendix to the thesis is problematic because of the varying views of publishers on copyright issues.)

3.2.3 A concluding chapter must be included to summarise and discuss the results of the research. This final chapter should present a critical synthesis or analysis of the overall contribution of the work to the relevant discipline.

3.2.4 The published and thesis versions of an article do not have to match exactly, although generally it is expected that they will be very similar. While slight variations may exist between the two versions (introduced at the proof-reading stage, for example), the document included in the thesis will generally be the final accepted manuscript of the article.

3.2.5 The following list shows a suggested structure for the presentation of material in an article-based thesis. Students are advised to check with their department for any specifications that may be stipulated by that department.

Title Page
Abstract
Declaration
Acknowledgement (optional)
Dedication (optional)
Table of Contents
List of Tables
List of Figures
List of Appendices
Nomenclature/List of Abbreviations
Introduction
Chapter 1 Literature Review
Chapters comprising articles (body of work): see no. 3.2.2 above
Discussion
Conclusion
References
Appendices

3.3 Library Versions

3.3.1 In line with Athlone Institute of Technology policy, PhD theses submitted in article-based format will be made available electronically subject to agreed procedures with the library – see no. 1.12 above.

3.3.2 The electronic version should be exactly the same as the printed version. Prior to submission, candidates should check with the publisher to determine the publisher’s open access policy as it is possible that the candidate cannot include some published articles online in a particular form or before a specific period of time has passed.
Appendix 3

Guideline for Masters to PhD Transfer

Transfer from the Masters to the PhD Register
The following is the minimum content required in this Research Proposal to be submitted to the School of Graduate School when requesting a student’s transfer from the Masters to the PhD Register. In the case where the proposed research is being carried out in the context of a larger research programme, the research proposal should primarily focus on the student’s individual project, except to put the student’s project in context. In particular, the research proposal should seek to critically discuss how the criteria in Appendix 5, Table 2 of the AIT’s Research Postgraduate Regulations will be met.

Review of Progress to Date
Substantial report on progress and achievements to date in Masters Project (please append copy of original Masters Research proposal).

a. Abstract (250 words) summarising the progress and achievements with respect to the original work plan
b. Minimum 3000-word report on the research carried out to date:
   i. Methodology used
   ii. Work carried out including any alterations to the original work plan
   iii. Results obtained and their contribution to the field of research
   iv. Details of any publications/exhibitions to date

PhD Research Proposal
1. Abstract (250 words): summarize 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 general field of research.
3. Objectives: Summarise the key objectives of the research.
4. Review of the state of the contemporary literature and discourse in the field or discipline: (1000 words minimum). Review the state of the art/current literature/current practice in the topic and critically evaluate the proposed research with reference to the scholarly literature.
5. Expected progress with respect to the state of the art/current literature/current practice in the field of research: Critically discuss how the proposed research has the potential to meet the criteria set out in Sections 4.3 of AIT’s Procedures and Guidelines Regulation including how the student may;
   I. demonstrate systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning
   II. demonstrate that they can interpret results appropriately and present conclusions in a well-reasoned manner.
6. Research methodology: critically evaluate the methodology to be used in the phase of this project and why it is appropriate to the research objectives.
7. Work Plan: Present the research work plan, evaluating 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.
## Appendix 4

### Research Postgraduate Forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form Code</th>
<th>Title of Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS1</td>
<td>Application for Registration of a Research Degree Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS2</td>
<td>Intention to Present for Transfer to PhD Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS3</td>
<td>Intention to Present and Submission of Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS4</td>
<td>Permission to Continue (beyond prescribed period of registration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS5</td>
<td>Notification of Change of Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS6</td>
<td>Graduate Support Panel (GSP) Annual Progression Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS7</td>
<td>Graduate Support Panel (GSP) Repeat Progression Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS8</td>
<td>Leave of Absence Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS9</td>
<td>Re-admission following Leave of Absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS10</td>
<td>Transfer Assessment Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS11</td>
<td>External Examiner’s Report - Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS12</td>
<td>Internal Examiner’s Report - Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS13</td>
<td>Internal Examiner’s Report – Masters (Confirming Report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS14</td>
<td>External Examiner’s Report - PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS15</td>
<td>Internal Examiner’s Report - PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS16</td>
<td>Internal Examiner’s Report – PhD (Confirming Report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS17</td>
<td>Chairperson’s Report Form for PhD Viva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS18</td>
<td>Finance Set-up Form and Scholarship Exemption Declaration Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These forms are designed to ensure that each stage of the postgraduate student’s progress is correctly administered in accordance with the research postgraduate academic regulations. The stage and/or process to which each form applies is referred to in the title of the relevant form.

The forms are available at [www.ait.ie/graduateschool](http://www.ait.ie/graduateschool)
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) /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development, participation in society and community, employment, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>access to additional education and training.</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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge – kind</td>
<td>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know-how and skill – range</td>
<td>Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know-how and skill – selectivity</td>
<td>Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – context</td>
<td>Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – role</td>
<td>Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – learning to learn</td>
<td>Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence – insight</td>
<td>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression &amp; Transfer</td>
<td>Progression to programmes leading to Doctoral Degree (Award-type O), or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to another Master’s Degree or to a Post-graduate Diploma (Award-types M or N).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Articulation
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volume</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge – breadth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge – kind</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Know-how and skill – range</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Know-how and skill – selectivity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Competence – context</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Competence – role</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence – learning to learn</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence – insight</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>