

Lámhleabhar
Rialacháin agus Nósanna
Imeachta Acadúla

**Handbook of Academic
Regulations and
Procedures**

BREATHAR DE MÓ LÓCHRANN



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MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHIURE GAN SMÁL

Contents

Document Control.....	3
Foreword.....	4
1. Academic Regulations	5
1.1 Academic Governance at Mary Immaculate College.....	5
1.2 Enrolment and Deferral of a Place.....	5
1.3 Registration.....	6
1.4 Assessment and Grading.....	6
1.5 Performance Standards	8
1.6 Academic Awards	8
1.7 Implementation, Interpretation and Review	9
2. Marks and Standards	10
2.1 Assessment	10
2.2 Examiners.....	10
2.3 Faculty Examination Boards.....	12
2.4 Academic Awards	13
2.5 Grading	13
2.6 Bachelor’s Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates	14
2.7 Taught Master’s Degree	15
2.8 Master’s Degree (by Research and Thesis)	15
2.9 Professional Doctorate	16
2.10 Doctor of Philosophy – Traditional Model.....	16
2.11 Doctor of Philosophy – Structured PhD	16
2.12 Aegrotat Awards	17
2.13 Posthumous Awards	17
2.14 Deferral of Examination Results	18
2.15 Applicability of Marks and Standards	18
3. Programme-Specific Regulations	19
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 Cyclical Programme Progression	19
3.3 Partner Institutions and Study Abroad Progression	19
3.4 Taught Master’s Degree Offered on a Flexible Part-time Basis.....	19
3.5 Faculty of Education	20
3.6 Faculty of Arts.....	25
4. Supporting Procedures.....	27
4.1 Assessment	27
4.2 Grading	29
4.3 Student Progression.....	34
4.4 Student Status Committee.....	37
4.5 Supporting Procedures Appendix 1: Assessment Regulations	40
5. Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations	42
5.1 Introduction	42
5.2 Higher Degrees	42
5.3 Applications	43
5.4 Admission: Entry Requirements for Research Degrees (Including Professional Doctorates).....	44
5.5 Supervisory Panel and Supervision	45
5.6 Research Student Progression	46
5.7 Location of Research.....	50
5.8 Periods of Registration.....	50
5.9 Leave of Absence	50
5.10 Generic and Transferable Skills Training.....	51
5.11 Research Ethics and Research Integrity	51
5.12 Thesis Specifications	51

5.13 Copyright and Intellectual Property.....52
5.14 Examination Procedures52
5.15 Appeals57
5.16 Review and Interpretation.....57
5.17 Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations Appendices58

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Foreword

This Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures sets out the regulations and procedures governing student enrolment, registration, assessment, grading, progression and graduation at Mary Immaculate College (sometimes referred to as ‘the College’ throughout the handbook). It is divided into five chapters: *Academic Regulations, Marks and Standards, Programme-Specific Regulations, Supporting Procedures* and *Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations*. Appendices relating to the supporting procedures (chapter 4) and the research postgraduate academic regulations (chapter 5) are included at the end of the respective chapters.

The [Student Handbook](#) is a separate document and is available on the College’s website. The Student Handbook outlines all the academic requirements that must be met by students at Mary Immaculate College.

The *Academic Regulations, Marks and Standards, Programme-Specific Regulations, Supporting Procedures* and *Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations* are intended to provide effective mechanisms and structures to ensure that students are fairly and objectively assessed while at the same time maintaining Mary Immaculate College’s high academic standards. Academic members of staff are required to comply with the provisions of these documents.

Where relevant, items are cross-referenced with other items and other chapters through the use of hyperlinks. Some hyperlinks may include the following abbreviations: AR (Academic Regulations), MS (Marks and Standards), PSR (Programme-Specific Regulations), SP (Supporting Procedures) and PG (Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations). For example, a reference to section 4 of the *Academic Regulations* will appear as AR 1.4, while a reference to paragraph 1.4.1 of that section will appear as AR 1.4.1.

This handbook was compiled in the context of Mary Immaculate College’s mission statement (see below) and is intended to be used for reference and action, as appropriate, by all members of staff.

Mission Statement

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, founded in 1898, is a third-level Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts.

The College community promotes excellence in teaching, learning and research at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It seeks to foster the intellectual, spiritual, personal and professional development of students within a supportive and challenging environment that guarantees the intellectual freedom of staff and students.

In particular, the College seeks to foster in its students a spirit of justice and compassion in the service of others, together with an openness to the religious tradition and values of each individual.

The College promotes a sense of identity enriched by an awareness of its Catholic tradition, the cultures, languages and traditions of Ireland, and its special commitment to the Irish language.

Mary Immaculate College respects cultural diversity. It strives to promote equity in society and to provide an environment where all have freedom and opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The official version of this handbook can be found on the College’s website at <https://www.mic.ul.ie/current-students/academic-regulations>. Users are encouraged to reference the online version at all times. Given that the content of the handbook may be updated from time to time, a printed version will not be provided by the College to users.

1. Academic Regulations

1.1 Academic Governance at Mary Immaculate College

- 1.1.1 As Mary Immaculate College is a linked provider of the University of Limerick, the Academic Council of the University of Limerick is responsible for approving the academic policies and standards at Mary Immaculate College.
- 1.1.2 *An Chomhairle Acadúil* makes recommendations on final awards for ratification by the University of Limerick Academic Council.
- 1.1.3 Each faculty has a Faculty Board. Each Faculty Board, under the chair of its respective Dean, is responsible for the academic affairs of that faculty.
- 1.1.4 Faculty Boards are sub-committees of *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.
- 1.1.5 Each faculty has a Faculty Examination Board to review student performance. Faculty Examination Boards review and approve submitted grades.
- 1.1.6 Faculty Examination Boards shall make appropriate arrangements as are necessary for the processing of its students.

1.2 Enrolment and Deferral of a Place

- 1.2.1 An applicant who accepts a formal offer of a place at Mary Immaculate College and who pays the requisite fees may enrol on the relevant programme of study and year of study under the conditions specified in the offer. Such enrolment shall take place at the times and in the manner specified to the student by the College.
- 1.2.2 Each enrolled student shall continue to pay the requisite programme and other fees at the times and in the manner specified to the student from time to time by the College. A student may be denied permission to proceed to the next part of their programme of study if all fees have not been paid in full.
- 1.2.3 Failure to comply with the College's requirements at 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 at the times and in the manner specified to the student may result in the invalidation of the offer of a place and/or the termination of the student's enrolment.
- 1.2.4 A student shall be enrolled for one programme and year of study only in each semester. Exceptions may be approved by the Vice-President Academic Affairs.
- 1.2.5 A student who wishes to change their enrolment status ([SP 4.4.2.2](#)) may apply to do so at the times and in the manner specified from time to time by the College.
- 1.2.6 An applicant who is offered a place on Year 1 of an undergraduate programme through the CAO can apply to defer their place for one year. Such applicants should not accept their place through the CAO but should apply in writing to the Admissions Office to request the deferral.
- 1.2.7 A student who commences Year 1 of an undergraduate programme but subsequently finds that they cannot continue on the programme can apply to the Admissions Office for a deferral up to the end of Week 3 of Semester 1, Year 1. Deferral requests cannot be considered after Week 3.
- 1.2.8 An applicant who is offered a place on Year 1 of a taught postgraduate programme can apply to defer their place for one year (or until the next available intake) if the programme has a deferral option. Such applicants should accept their place through the postgraduate application process and subsequently apply in writing to the Research and Graduate School to request the deferral. Deferral requests cannot be considered once the programme has started except under 1.2.9.

- 1.2.9 A student who commences Year 1 of a taught postgraduate programme but subsequently finds that they cannot continue on the programme can apply to the Research and Graduate School for a deferral up to the end of Week 3 of Semester 1, Year 1 if the programme has a deferral option. Deferral requests cannot be considered after Week 3.

1.3 Registration

- 1.3.1 Each student shall register each semester for the modules in which they wish to receive grades in that semester. Such registrations shall include all modules specified for that semester in the student's programme of study. Registration must take place at the times and in the manner specified by the College. Payment of fees shall not constitute registration.
- 1.3.2 Failure to comply with the College's requirements at 1.3.1 at the times and in the manner specified to the student may result in the student's exclusion from assessments in the module(s) for which they fail to register. A student may also be personally liable for late registration fees and for academic fees in programmes for which they fail to register in the manner specified by the College.
- 1.3.3 A student may not register for a module that they are deemed to have passed except in accordance with these regulations (see 1.4.17 below).

1.4 Assessment and Grading

- 1.4.1 Mary Immaculate College operates a modular credit continual assessment system, which provides continual feedback of information to students on their academic performance.
- 1.4.2 Students shall be assessed in the set of modules for which they are registered each semester. Students may be assessed using a continual assessment model and/or formal examinations. The College shall provide formal examinations at the end of each semester and at annual repeats. Supporting procedures shall be adopted in relation to the administration of such examinations. Under exceptional circumstances (i.e. those not covered by [regulations 4.2.3](#) – I Grades – in chapter 4, Supporting Procedures) and with the express permission of the Vice-President Academic Affairs, the student may be allowed to defer a formal examination until the next repeat opportunity.
- 1.4.3 On starting to teach a module, the academic staff member(s) responsible for teaching the module shall outline to the students in handout or electronic form the learning outcomes of the module, indicative grade descriptors corresponding to each grade, the criteria on which assessment is to be based, the minimum performance standard and the weighting allocated to each assessment instrument associated with the module. The academic staff member shall also indicate the repeat assessment instrument(s) associated with the module. See 1.4.16 below in relation to non-repeatable modules.
- 1.4.4 The academic staff member responsible for teaching a module shall prepare the assessment instruments associated with the module and shall meet the requirements of external examiners at the times and in the manner approved from time to time by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. ([MS 2.1](#) and [SP 4.1.2](#))
- 1.4.5 The academic staff member responsible for teaching a module shall administer or arrange for the administration of assessment instruments associated with the module in the manner prescribed from time to time by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. ([SP 4.1.2](#))
- 1.4.6 A grade that is representative of the quality of a student's performance in a particular module shall be awarded at the end of each semester for that module ([MS 2.5.1](#) and [SP 4.2](#)). The grades that may be awarded shall be specified from time to time in the College's [Marks and Standards](#) (chapter 2 of this handbook).

- 1.4.7 The academic staff member responsible for teaching a particular module shall be responsible for assessing ([MS 2.1](#)) and grading ([SP 4.2](#)) students on the module material.
- 1.4.8 Faculty Examination Boards shall be convened by the Vice-President Academic Affairs to review student performance. There shall be an appropriate representation of academic staff members at such meetings.
- 1.4.9 There shall be a meeting of *An Chomhairle Acadúil* following the Faculty Examination Boards, at which all graduating programmes shall be reviewed.
- 1.4.10 In cases where *An Chomhairle Acadúil* is satisfied with the proposed graduating programmes, these shall be approved and submitted to the Academic Council of the University of Limerick. Notwithstanding the approval of the *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, a student may not graduate until they have fully complied with the terms imposed in accordance with section 5 of the Code of Student Conduct.
- 1.4.11 In cases where the Faculty Examination Board is not satisfied with proposed grades, it shall refer these to the Head of Department concerned, who shall be responsible for implementing the decisions of the Faculty Examination Board within a specified time and for informing the Vice-President Academic Affairs of the outcome within the specified time.
- 1.4.12 Only grades approved by the Academic Council of the University of Limerick shall be released to students. Individual staff who have access to grades prior to the Academic Council of the University of Limerick having approved them shall not release them or use them to make decisions regarding a student.
- 1.4.13 When the Academic Council of the University of Limerick has approved all grades for the semester, each student shall be provided with a transcript of their current academic performance.
- 1.4.14 It shall be each student's responsibility to use this transcript in order to monitor their own progress and to take such action as shall be necessary to ensure that they are complying with required standards of quality and performance.
- 1.4.15 Should a student consider that they may have been assigned an incorrect grade, they may request a recheck of the grade in accordance with the procedures laid down from time to time by the College. ([SP 4.2.9](#))
- 1.4.16 The College shall offer annual repeat assessments at a time to be decided by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. Annual repeats will be available in all modules in all years of all academic programmes except in the following circumstances:
- a) Where a Head of Department makes a written submission to the Vice-President Academic Affairs not to offer a repeat in a module or part thereof in cases where:
 - i. It would not be feasible to offer a repeat assessment
 - ii. Specific required skills have not been demonstrated by the student
 - b) In the case of a PARE (professional accreditation related elements) module where restrictions apply to repeat opportunities.
- Approval by the Vice-President Academic Affairs of non-repeatable modules will be granted on an exceptional basis only.
- 1.4.17 Annual repeats are available to all students in the year in which they are currently registered other than graduands, both progressing and non-progressing, who have the following grades in individual modules after the Spring semester examinations: F, NG, D1, D2. I grades not previously cleared via alternative mechanisms must be cleared during the annual repeats.
- 1.4.18 It is the responsibility of students to make themselves available for the annual repeats.

- 1.4.19 The repeat assessment need not be identical in form to the original assessment but must be equivalent in standard.
- 1.4.20 The provision of annual repeats for a student who fails a professional placement module (school placement, professional placement, off-campus placement) will be at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board.

1.5 Performance Standards

- 1.5.1 The quality and standard of a student's academic performance shall be expressed as a numerical average of that performance in the credited modules attempted. This average shall be termed quality credit average (QCA) and shall be calculated on a semester and on a cumulative basis for each programme or for each part of a programme. ([SP 4.3.1](#))
- 1.5.2 The Faculty Examination Boards shall confirm or amend all recommendations on students' cumulative performances to date ([SP 4.3.2](#)). The Faculty Examination Board shall report to *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. *An Chomhairle Acadúil* shall report to the next meeting of the Academic Council of the University of Limerick.
- 1.5.3 The minimum academic performance standard for each semester, unless otherwise specified by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, shall be the achievement of a cumulative QCA of 2.00, with full credits awarded in all modules of the prescribed programme to date. ([SP 4.3.3](#))
- 1.5.4 Students who achieve the minimum performance standard at the end of each academic year shall proceed to the next year of their programme of study or to graduation.
- 1.5.5 The Faculty Examination Boards may recommend that a student's enrolment be terminated should the student's academic performance fail to reach the minimum standard. A student who considers that the Faculty Examination Board did not take exceptional extenuating circumstances into account in their case may appeal the termination of studies decision at the time and in the manner specified from time to time by the College.
- 1.5.6 *An Chomhairle Acadúil* may recognise the excellent academic performance of an individual student in a particular semester by placing the student's name on a list known as the President's List. Such students will receive a congratulatory letter from the President.

1.6 Academic Awards

- 1.6.1 Faculty Examination Boards shall be convened to review student performance at the end of the final semester of the final year of a programme.
- 1.6.2 The Vice-President Academic Affairs shall be responsible for convening Faculty Examination Board meetings at appropriate times to make recommendations to *An Chomhairle Acadúil* as to the awards to be made to students who have completed programmes of study and who have requested such consideration in the manner specified.
- 1.6.3 The Faculty Examination Boards shall recommend to *An Chomhairle Acadúil* that a student who attains at least the minimum standard in accordance with the marks and standards specified from time to time by the College will be submitted to the Academic Council of the University of Limerick, which will confer them with the relevant academic award. ([MS 2.3](#))
- 1.6.4 *An Chomhairle Acadúil* shall recommend to the Academic Council of the University of Limerick the classification of the award to be conferred on each eligible student in accordance with the marks and standards specified from time to time by the College ([MS 2.3](#)). Notwithstanding the approval of the Academic Council of the University of Limerick of the relevant award or final classification of the award, these may be amended in accordance with section 5 of the Code of Student Conduct.

1.6.5 Where the Academic Council of the University of Limerick determines that a student does not qualify for an award, the student shall be informed in writing of the extent of additional or outstanding work required from them ([MS 2.14](#)). Such a student may register to complete the specified requirements at the times and in the manner specified from time to time by the College. Further consideration by the Faculty Examination Board shall be subject to application as at 1.6.1 above.

1.7 Implementation, Interpretation and Review

1.7.1 The Vice-President Academic Affairs shall ensure that all these regulations are implemented. It is the responsibility of students and staff to take all appropriate steps to comply with the relevant requirements specified in these academic regulations. To this end, student orientation and staff induction programmes will introduce students and staff, respectively, to the regulations and to sources of information and assistance in attempting to comply with them.

1.7.2 Marks and standards associated with these academic regulations are specified from time to time by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. Programme-specific regulations that apply *only* to particular programmes of study are specified from time to time by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. Supporting procedures designed to achieve compliance with the academic regulations and with the associated marks and standards are also specified from time to time by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.

1.7.3 Where a dispute arises in interpreting the academic regulations, marks and standards or associated procedures, the Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee shall be the final arbiter.

1.7.4 The Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee shall, from time to time, convene the Academic Programme Appraisal Committee (APAC) for the purpose of reviewing the application and interpretation of the foregoing academic regulations and associated marks and standards and supporting procedures with a view to making recommendations, as appropriate, to *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.

2. Marks and Standards

The following marks and standards apply to most Mary Immaculate College programmes. Programme-specific regulations that fall outside the realm of these marks and standards are given in chapter 3 of this handbook.

2.1 Assessment

2.1.1 The term 'assessment' in these marks and standards refers to any form of prescribed work that is evaluated for the purpose of awarding a grade. In particular, it includes written, oral and practical examinations, coursework, project work, examination of theses, dissertations and similar work, and such other means of evaluating candidates' performance as may have been approved or prescribed by *An Chomhairle Acadúil* in relation to any course of study or instruction.

2.1.2 The Vice-President Academic Affairs shall have overall responsibility for the conduct of assessments at Mary Immaculate College and shall, in particular, ensure:

- a) That appropriate methods of assessment are in place for each candidate
- b) That assessment papers/materials are prepared by internal examiners, approved by external examiners and printed in good time for final assessments ([SP 4.1.2](#))
- c) That examination documentation and other assessment materials are examined by internal examiners and that results for each candidate as approved by the external examiners are made available for the relevant Faculty Examination Board meeting.
- d) That accurate records relating to continual assessment, along with all associated materials, are maintained and made available as required, particularly to external examiners
- e) That proper arrangements are made for holding meetings of *An Chomhairle Acadúil* and Faculty Examination Boards in accordance with the provisions of section 2.3 below
- f) That the recommendations of meetings of Faculty Examination Boards are passed to *An Chomhairle Acadúil* in a timely manner

2.1.3 The Student Academic Administration Office shall have responsibility for the conduct of formal examinations at Mary Immaculate College and shall, in particular, ensure that:

- a) Appropriate assessment arrangements are made for each candidate, including any special requirements including, but not limited to, alternatives to printed material and/or examination booklets, additional time, special facilities and/or arrangements, special assistance such as readers, and/or other approved special forms of assessment
- b) Maximum security applies in all matters pertaining to formal examinations

2.2 Examiners

2.2.1 Academic staff members who are responsible for assessment functions shall be deemed to be internal examiners.

2.2.2 In the case of a module in which the teaching is shared by more than one academic staff member, the relevant Head of Department shall nominate an academic staff member as internal examiner for that module.

2.2.3 The role of the internal examiner shall be as follows:

- a) To prepare, in consultation either directly or through programme coordinator and/or Heads of Department, appropriate assessment instruments that accord with internationally established and accepted academic practice and reflect internationally acceptable academic standards
- b) To take due account of comments and amendments proposed by the external examiner(s)
- c) To submit agreed formal examination papers in good time and in sufficient quantities to the Student Academic Administration Office or the Education Office ([SP 4.1.2](#))

- d) To propose grades to be awarded to each candidate
- e) To attend and contribute to the deliberations of meetings of the relevant Faculty Examination Boards

- 2.2.4 On the recommendation of the *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, external examiner nominations are forwarded to the Academic Council at the University of Limerick for appointment by the Governing Authority so that internal examiners can properly and effectively discharge their duties set out in 2.2.3. The principal roles of the external examiner are to ensure that the standards of the College's assessments are adequate and to maintain uniformity of standards as far as is practicable from year to year. In particular, external examiners should ensure that the appropriate standards with regard to academic grades of honours are applied. Comparability of standards between faculties should be achieved and maintained as far as is feasible.
- 2.2.5 External examiners will be provided with drafts of examination papers, marking schemes and other relevant material. External examiners are entitled to make suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions or amendments.
- 2.2.6 The external examiners shall agree with the internal examiners on the most appropriate ways of achieving compliance with the highest internationally accepted academic standards. To achieve this in relation to assessments, Deans, Assistant Deans, Heads of Department and programme coordinators shall ensure that external examiners are provided with information detailing the syllabuses, aims, objectives and structures of all programmes and modules at such time as to allow adequate opportunity for full assimilation of the information provided and to enable the external examiners to take into account the implications of individual assessment instruments on the overall academic curricula concerned.
- 2.2.7 External examiners will be provided with a representative sample of examination booklets and other material presented for assessment.
- 2.2.8 Drawn on a basis agreed between the internal and external examiners, the sample material should be sufficient to enable the external examiners to form a judgement on the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classification, in borderline cases and in proposed deferred and failed results.
- 2.2.9 External examiners are expected to visit the College each academic year. The visit takes place at the time of determination of final results and should conform to the arrangements made in this regard by the College. Should an external examiner be unable to visit the College, full consultation shall take place between the external examiner and internal examiners, a written record of which shall be available to the Faculty Examination Board.
- 2.2.10 Where oral examinations constitute a significant part of the assessment for a module, appropriate arrangements for the external examining of such assessment shall be made between the internal and external examiners.
- 2.2.11 When visiting the College, external examiners shall:
- a) Review the grades and, if deemed necessary, interview candidates as the external examiners see fit
 - b) Agree with the respective internal examiners and confirm the list of candidates for awards at different classification levels for consideration by the relevant Faculty Examination Board
- 2.2.12 Not later than 30 September each year and on the form provided by the Provost & Deputy President, University of Limerick, external examiners are required to submit a full report on the assessments with which they are involved. One report for each subject examined will normally be sufficient. The report should be sent to the Provost & Deputy President, University of

Limerick, from where it will be copied to the relevant Mary Immaculate College academic staff members.

2.2.13 External examiners and the College shall ensure that all communications in relation to examinations are secure and confidential.

2.2.14 In the event of an unresolved matter between the external and internal examiners, the Academic Council of the University of Limerick shall adjudicate on the matter in question, and its decision shall be final.

2.3 Faculty Examination Boards

2.3.1 Faculty Examination Boards shall be convened by the Vice-President Academic Affairs. The Faculty Examination Boards shall make recommendations to *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.

2.3.2 *An Chomhairle Acadúil* shall make recommendations to the Academic Council of the University of Limerick in relation to the awards to be made to students who have completed the College's programmes of study.

2.3.3 The dates of *An Chomhairle Acadúil* meetings shall be determined by the President, who shall convene such meetings at appropriate times.

2.3.4 A Faculty Examination Board shall comprise the Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee (chairperson) and all the internal examiners who participated in the assessments for the award(s) for which candidates are to be considered at the Faculty Examination Board meeting.

2.3.5 On approval by Faculty Examination Boards, candidates' proposed awards are presented to a meeting of *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.

2.3.6 Meetings of Faculty Examination Boards should allow for full and frank discussion of any individual cases before a final recommendation is made to *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.

2.3.7 Decisions of the Faculty Examination Boards shall be submitted as recommendations to *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, which shall consider and have the right to adopt, modify or reject such recommendations.

2.3.8 At the Faculty Examination Board meeting, a final results record shall be presented and endorsed, which shall record the cumulative performance of each candidate and which, in relation to each candidate's overall result, shall indicate the level of award or that the student is not presenting, has been deferred or has failed or is being recommended for a postgraduate award by research and thesis. In the case of a candidate who is deferred or has failed, recommendations of exemptions, if any, should be indicated on the broadsheet of results.

2.3.9 Every effort shall be made by the internal and external examiners to agree final grades prior to the Faculty Examination Board meeting. In the event of a grading disagreement that remains unresolved between examiners prior to the Faculty Examination Board meeting, an examiner who continues to dissent at the meeting shall have the right to have their dissenting opinion appended to the final results record.

2.3.10 The final results record shall be forwarded by the Vice-President Academic Affairs to *An Chomhairle Acadúil* at the earliest opportunity following the Faculty Examination Board meeting.

2.3.11 Any examiner's dissenting opinion that has been appended to the final results record shall be brought to the attention of *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, whose decision in relation to the opinion shall be final, as provided for in 2.3.7 above.

2.3.12 The proceedings and deliberations of Faculty Examination Boards are strictly confidential. Under no circumstances should any person attending a meeting of a board disclose to any

other person a decision of the board or any document, information or opinion considered, conveyed or expressed at the meeting.

2.3.13 The awards recommended by the Faculty Examination Boards are provisional awards, and *An Chomhairle Acadúil* retains the right to amend all such awards.

2.3.14 All academic awards ratified by *An Chomhairle Acadúil* shall be sent to the Academic Council of the University of Limerick for final approval.

2.4 Academic Awards

2.4.1 The granting of a University of Limerick award shall be on the basis of a candidate's performance in assessments or other tests of the attainment of learning outcomes that have been duly set by the academic staff members of the College and approved and monitored by external examiner(s).

2.4.2 The Academic Council of the University of Limerick shall meet to consider the recommendations of *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. The decisions of the Academic Council in the case of each candidate considered shall be final, and appropriate awards shall be granted to the candidate by the University of Limerick. This meeting of the Academic Council shall occur as soon after *An Chomhairle Acadúil* meeting as is practicable. The meeting shall determine the award, including grade and classification (if applicable), to be conferred on each candidate considered.

2.4.3 The Vice-President Academic Affairs shall communicate the relevant decisions of the Academic Council of the University of Limerick to each Mary Immaculate College candidate at the earliest possible opportunity. Where the Mary Immaculate College candidate is to receive an award of the University of Limerick, the President shall invite the candidate to the next relevant conferring ceremony of the College, where they will be conferred with the award attained.

2.5 Grading

2.5.1 A grade that is representative of the quality of a student's performance in a particular module shall be awarded at the end of each semester for each module for which the student is registered.

2.5.2 The table to follow lists the grades that can be awarded.

Table 2.1: Academic Grades

Grade	Grade Descriptors: Meta Level (Indicative grade descriptors at module level will be determined in accordance with regulation AR 1.4.3.)	QPV ¹	Credits Awarded
A1	Outstanding Performance (<i>First honours</i>)	4.00	Yes
A2	Excellent Performance (<i>First honours</i>)	3.60	Yes
B1	Very Good Performance (<i>Honours 2.1</i>)	3.20	Yes
B2	Good Performance (<i>Honours 2.1</i>)	3.00	Yes
B3	Competent Performance (<i>Honours 2.2</i>)	2.80	Yes
C1	Satisfactory Performance (<i>Honours 2.2</i>)	2.60	Yes
C2	Acceptable Performance (<i>Third honours</i>)	2.40	Yes
C3	Minimally Acceptable Performance (<i>Third honours</i>)	2.00	Yes
D1	Weak Performance (<i>Compensating fail</i>)	1.60	Yes
D2	Poor Performance (<i>Compensating fail</i>)	1.20	Yes
F	Fail (<i>No compensation allowed</i>)	0.00	No
NG	Fail (<i>No compensation allowed</i>)	0.00	No
EX	Student exempted from the requirements of the module because of previous equivalent study or work. Full credits awarded.	–	Yes
G	Audit	–	No
I	Certified illness/immediate family crisis	–	No
M	Awarded in cases of projects spanning multiple semesters or sequences of linked modules	–	No
P	Pass in a module taken on a pass/fail basis	–	Yes
N	Failure in a module taken on a pass/fail basis	–	No

2.6 Bachelor's Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates

2.6.1 The award of a bachelor's degree, diploma (either undergraduate or postgraduate) or certificate (either undergraduate or postgraduate) is made at honours levels. To qualify for the award of a bachelor's degree or diploma or certificate, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the assessment and other requirements set for the programme of study
- Achieve a minimum final cumulative QCA of 2.00, with full credits in all prescribed modules of the programme of study
- Satisfy any programme-specific regulations as specified for particular programmes

2.6.2 Awards will be at one of the following classifications:

Award Classification	Cumulative QCA
First class honours	3.40
Second class honours grade 1 (2.1)	3.00
Second class honours grade 2 (2.2)	2.60
Third class honours	2.00

2.6.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of 2.6.2 above, the Faculty Examination Board may consider a candidate whose final cumulative QCA is not more than 0.10 less than the QCA required for a first class, 2.1 or 2.2 classification and who satisfies the other requirements for the proposed award.

¹ Quality point value

- 2.6.4 In the case of programmes that consist of a part 1 and part 2 structure, the award and award classification shall be made on the basis of performance of candidates in part 2 only of such programmes. Where there are more than two years in part 2 of the programme, a relative weighting of 1:2:2 shall be assigned to years 1, 2 and 3 of part 2, respectively. In the case of all other programmes, the award of the degree shall be based on the candidate's full cumulative performance over the complete programme.
- 2.6.5 In the case of a Mary Immaculate College student pursuing a University of Limerick qualification in both Mary Immaculate College and another institution, the student must spend the final year of study in Mary Immaculate College or complete the majority of their programme of study in Mary Immaculate College.

2.7 Taught Master's Degree

- 2.7.1 A master's degree by coursework and dissertation (or equivalent) may be awarded at honours classification (first class, second class or third class honours). To be eligible for the award of a master's degree by coursework and dissertation (or equivalent) at honours classification, a candidate must:
- Satisfy all the assessment and other requirements set for the programme of study
 - Achieve a minimum grade of C3 in the dissertation component of the programme
 - Achieve a minimum final cumulative QCA of 2.00, with full credits in all prescribed elements of the programme of study
- 2.7.2 In the case of a linked graduate diploma/master's degree programme of which the taught element, in whole or in part, constitutes a graduate diploma programme, a student shall be required to attain a minimum honours 2.2 standard in the taught component to be eligible for progression to the master's component of the programme.
- 2.7.3 All cases referred to and provided for in item 2.7.2 shall require the approval of the relevant Faculty Examination Board for progression to the master's component of the programme in question.
- 2.7.4 The classification of honours awards shall be determined as follows:
- | Award Classification | Cumulative QCA |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| First class honours | 3.40 |
| Second class honours grade 1 (2.1) | 3.00 |
| Second class honours grade 2 (2.2) | 2.60 |
| Third class honours | 2.00 |
- 2.7.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of 2.7.1 above, the Faculty Examination Board may consider a candidate whose final cumulative QCA is not more than 0.10 less than the QCA required for a first class, 2.1 or 2.2 classification and who satisfies the other requirements for an honours award for the award of a master's degree at the appropriate honours classification.

2.8 Master's Degree (by Research and Thesis)

- 2.8.1 A master's degree by research and thesis is of honours standard and is awarded without classification. Subject to its successful completion, the thesis has a nominal value of 180 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits.
- 2.8.2 In the case of successful candidates, the broadsheet of results presented to the Faculty Examination Board should be annotated 'Recommended' and signed by the internal supervisor(s). The external examiner concerned should either endorse the broadsheet of results or, prior to the Faculty Examination Board meeting, have conveyed in their report to the Vice-President Academic Affairs their recommendation for the award of the relevant master's degree to the candidate concerned.

2.9 Professional Doctorate

- 2.9.1 The professional doctorate is awarded to a candidate on the basis of the student having followed a prescribed programme of study and research. The programme may also include an experiential and/or professional placement element.
- 2.9.2 The degree of professional doctorate is awarded without classification. Subject to its successful completion, the professional doctorate has a nominal value of 270 ECTS credits.
- 2.9.3 Students must satisfactorily complete all elements of the taught programme and have achieved a cumulative QCA of 3.00 or higher to be considered for the award of the professional doctorate.
- 2.9.4 In the case of successful candidates, the broadsheet of results should be annotated 'Recommended' and signed by the internal supervisor(s). The external examiner concerned should either endorse the broadsheet of results or, prior to the Faculty Examination Board meeting, have conveyed in their report to the Vice-President Academic Affairs their recommendation for the award of the degree of professional doctorate to the candidate concerned.

See [Appendix 5](#) of chapter 5 for further details on the professional doctorate.

2.10 Doctor of Philosophy – Traditional Model

- 2.10.1 The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is the highest academic qualification awarded by the University of Limerick and is awarded to successful candidates on the strength of a body of original work of scholarship prepared and presented in accordance with internationally accepted academic standards and in the form of a doctoral thesis.
- 2.10.2 The degree of PhD is awarded without classification. Subject to its successful completion, the thesis has a nominal value of 270 ECTS credits.
- 2.10.3 In the case of successful candidates, the broadsheet of results should be annotated 'Recommended' and signed by the internal supervisor(s). The external examiner concerned should either endorse the broadsheet of results or, prior to the Faculty Examination Board meeting, have conveyed in their report to the Vice-President Academic Affairs their recommendation for the award of the degree of PhD to the candidate concerned.

2.11 Doctor of Philosophy – Structured PhD

- 2.11.1 The Structured PhD degree is awarded on the successful completion of a structured programme of research, study, and personal and professional development.
- 2.11.2 Candidates who wish to pursue a Structured PhD programme will:
- Have a primary supervisor (or supervisors) and a Supervisory Panel, which will be involved in the annual progression assessment
 - Undertake a training needs analysis and maintain a Personal Development Plan (PDP)
 - Undertake discipline-specific modules, research skills, and generic and transferable skills courses as agreed in their PDP, to the value of at least 30 ECTS credits.
- 2.11.3 The total ECTS credits from a combination of the taught and research elements of a Structured PhD will not be fewer than 300 and not more than 360. Within these overall limits, the credits for the Structured PhD are made up as follows:
- A research thesis equivalent to 270 ECTS credits
 - Technical/discipline-specific courses of a minimum of 20 and up to a maximum of 80 ECTS credits
 - Research, transferable and generic skills courses of a minimum of 10 and up to a maximum of 50 ECTS credits (pass/fail)

See [Appendix 4](#) of chapter 5 for further details on the Structured PhD.

2.12 Aegrotat Awards

2.12.1 An aegrotat award may be awarded to a student who has died or is unable to complete their programme of study due to very serious illness or other grave circumstances. An award made on an aegrotat basis is unclassified and does not entitle the student to the benefits of an award of the University of Limerick, including meeting the entry requirements of a programme of further study, exemptions or recognition by professional bodies or the right to practise in a profession. In the event that a student who has received an aegrotat award makes a significant recovery from an illness, the student may be permitted to re-enter the programme of study.

2.12.2 Students eligible for consideration are those who:

- a) Are on a taught programme of study of minimum 60 ECTS credits and have completed at least two-thirds of the programme of study; or
- b) Are on a research master's programme of study (180 ECTS credits) for at least one full calendar year and have successfully progressed following all annual review; or
- c) Are on a professional doctorate or PhD programme of study or other research programme of study of minimum 270 ECTS credits for a least two full calendar years and have successfully progressed following all annual reviews

2.12.3 The award title will reflect the title of the degree programme (reference to Professional Qualification, where applicable, will be removed).

2.12.4 The award level will not be classified (in terms of first-class honours, etc.).

2.12.5 The award will not be aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications.

2.12.6 The recommendation by a Faculty Examination Board to award an aegrotat award will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of *An Chomhairle Acadúil* and then at the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Council of the University of Limerick. In exceptional circumstances, the Dean of Faculty or Vice-President Academic Affairs may request the Provost & Deputy President of the University of Limerick to convene an exceptional University Examination Board meeting to consider a Faculty Examination Board aegrotat award recommendation. The exceptional University Examination Board has delegated power from the Academic Council of the University of Limerick to approve an aegrotat award. Aegrotat awards will be conferred at the next conferring ceremony or, in exceptional circumstances, at another appropriate ceremony.

2.13 Posthumous Awards

2.13.1 A posthumous award may be awarded to a student who has died without having met the eligibility criteria for an aegrotat award. To be eligible for a posthumous award, the deceased student must have completed at least 30 ECTS credits on a taught programme or successfully passed at least one annual progression review on a research programme.

2.13.2 The award title will reflect the title of the degree programme (reference to Professional Qualification, where applicable, will be removed).

2.13.3 The award level will not be classified (in terms of first-class honours, etc.).

2.13.4 The award will not be aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications.

2.13.5 A Faculty Examination Board's recommendation to confer a posthumous award will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of *An Chomhairle Acadúil* and then at the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Council of the University of Limerick. The parchment may be presented to the next of kin at a future conferring ceremony.

2.14 Deferral of Examination Results

- 2.14.1 A board of examiners may recommend that a final decision on a candidate's result be deferred to enable the candidate to complete specific outstanding requirements of the programme of study that the candidate has pursued.
- 2.14.2 Any deferral of a decision in relation to a candidate's result shall be for a limited period, normally not exceeding one academic year.

2.15 Applicability of Marks and Standards

- 2.15.1 These general marks and standards and all associated procedures shall apply to all assessments and examinations leading to University of Limerick awards unless and until amended by the Academic Council of the University of Limerick. These marks and standards shall be read and interpreted in conjunction with the academic regulations determined from time to time by *An Chomhairle Acadúil* and shall apply to all Mary Immaculate College programmes of study that stand approved by the Academic Council of the University of Limerick and that lead to University of Limerick awards. Course approval documentation adopted by *An Chomhairle Acadúil* shall stipulate compliance with the provisions of these marks and standards.
- 2.15.2 The processing of examination results and awards shall be conducted within Mary Immaculate College, and recommendations for awards from *An Chomhairle Acadúil* shall be submitted to the Academic Council of the University of Limerick for ratification in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between UL and Mary Immaculate College (2019).

3. Programme-Specific Regulations

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Notwithstanding the general applicability of the academic regulations and marks and standards stipulated in the foregoing sections of this Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures, there are regulations approved by the Academic Council of the University of Limerick that apply *only* to particular programmes of study, which are detailed in this chapter.
- 3.1.2 Each such academic programme is specified, and its programme-specific regulations are detailed below.
- 3.1.3 In instances where there is potential for conflicting or contradictory interpretation between the College's general regulations and any such programme-specific regulations, the general regulations shall take precedence. In the event that this method of interpretation does not provide a clear resolution or unequivocal outcome, the final arbiter in the matter shall be the Vice-President Academic Affairs. The decision of the Vice-President Academic Affairs shall be final and binding.

3.2 Cyclical Programme Progression

- 3.2.1 Students on part-time cyclical programmes may, on an exceptional basis, be allowed to progress to the next year with a maximum of one deficient grade. This grade must be cleared by the end of the following academic year.

3.3 Partner Institutions and Study Abroad Progression

- 3.3.1 Students who undertake placement in partner institutions may, on the recommendation of the Faculty Examination Board, progress to the next year with deficient grades from their placement in the partner institution. The deficient grade must be cleared during the next academic year and prior to graduation. Where the deficient grade is cleared following a repeat assessment instrument, then in accordance with [section 4.2.6](#) in chapter 4, the repeat grade is capped. Where the deficient grade is cleared following submission of a grade from the partner institution, the grade is uncapped.

3.4 Taught Master's Degree Offered on a Flexible Part-time Basis

- 3.4.1 Students undertaking a master's degree offered on a flexible part-time basis may select the number of modules they register for each semester. Students must meet the normal registration deadlines in accordance with academic regulations 1.3. Students are required to complete all modules in the master's degree within three years.
- 3.4.2 Students undertaking a master's degree offered on a flexible part-time basis are not required to undergo critical review until they have attempted 90 ECTS credits or have been registered on the master's degree for three years.
- 3.4.3 Students who have completed 90 ECTS credits and have achieved the minimum standard for the award shall be considered for the award using the Academic Council examination process in accordance with regulation [MS 2.7](#).
- 3.4.4 Students subject to critical review who have not achieved the minimum standard for the award outlined in regulation [MS 2.7](#) will, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, be required to do one of the following:
- Take annual repeats for a maximum of four modules in any two-semester academic year.
 - Register for an additional year on the master's programme. The student is subject to critical review at the end of the extension period.
 - For programmes with an exit award option, register for the appropriate exit award in accordance with programme-specific regulations.

d) Have their enrolment terminated.

3.5 Faculty of Education

3.5.1 Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Education International and Bachelor of Education in Education and Psychology

- 3.5.1.1 A student who fails a school placement module shall be awarded an F grade or, in the case of Pass/Fail registration, an N grade.
- 3.5.1.2 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for school placement modules.
- 3.5.1.3 Save in exceptional circumstances, where a student fails a school placement, they shall be afforded only one further opportunity to repeat that placement.
- 3.5.1.4 A student who fails a school placement module (i.e. who fails the first attempt and also fails the repeat attempt) will normally have their enrolment on their current programme of study terminated.
- 3.5.1.5 A student who fails a school placement module (i.e. who fails the first attempt and also fails the repeat attempt) or who seeks to withdraw from a school placement module in years 1, 2 or 4 will be eligible for consideration, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, for an exit award or transfer to an appropriate exit programme, as listed below. The award type will depend on the number of credits accumulated by the student.
- Certificate in Education Studies (Minor Award (Level 7) [$\geq 60 + < 120$ ECTS])
 - Diploma in Education Studies (Minor Award (Level 7) [$\geq 120 + < 180$ ECTS])
 - BA Education Studies (Major Award (Level 7) [$\geq 180 + < 240$ ECTS])
 - BA Hons. Education Studies (Major Award (Level 8) [≥ 240 ECTS. The ECTS requirements for students registered on the three-year Level 8 Bachelor of Education programme is ≥ 180 ECTS.]
- 3.5.1.6 A student who is eligible for an exit award may take the appropriate award based on accumulated credits or may link in to approved modules in an attempt to fulfil the requirements for the next higher award. The approved modules will be determined following consultation between the student, the relevant Dean(s) and the Vice-President Academic Affairs.
- 3.5.1.7 Students who are due to start professional placement in the Spring semester of years 1 and 2 of the programmes are subject to critical review. A student who has deficient grades (including I grades) in more than four modules or whose residual QCA following the Autumn semester is less than 2.00 will normally not be allowed to progress to the Spring semester and will be required to repeat the Autumn semester prior to progressing to the Spring semester.
- 3.5.1.8 Students who receive an F grade in the oral Irish examination component of the following modules shall be awarded an F grade in the overall module:
- *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 1*
 - *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 2*
- 3.5.1.9 Where the student has passed the placement component of the module, they repeat the examination in the oral Irish component only. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.1.10 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for the oral Irish examination component of the module.
- 3.5.1.11 Students who receive an F grade in either the placement component or in the oral Irish examination component of the following modules shall be awarded an F grade in the overall module:

- *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 1*
- *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 2*

- 3.5.1.12 Where a student receives an F grade in either the placement component or the examination in the oral Irish component, they repeat only the F component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.1.13 Students who receive an F grade in the *Gaeilge* component (*Teanga* and *Múineadh na Gaeilge* combined) or in the English component of the module Language and Literacy 5 shall be awarded an F grade in the overall module.
- 3.5.1.14 Where a student has passed only one component – English or *Gaeilge* (*Teanga* and *Múineadh na Gaeilge* combined) – of the module Language and Literacy 5, they repeat only the F component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.1.15 Students who receive an F grade in the *Teanga* or the *Múineadh na Gaeilge* component of the module *An Ghaeilge agus Múineadh na Gaeilge 3* shall be awarded an F grade in the overall module.
- 3.5.1.16 Where the student has passed only one component (*Teanga* or *Múineadh na Gaeilge*) of the module *An Ghaeilge agus Múineadh na Gaeilge 3*, they repeat only the F component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.1.17 Students who receive an F grade in the English or the *Gaeilge* component of the module Language and Literacy 4 shall be awarded an F grade in the overall module.
- 3.5.1.18 Where the student has passed only one component (English or *Gaeilge*) of the module Language and Literacy 4, they repeat only the F component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.1.19 To progress into the final year of their programme, students are required by the end of Year 3 of the programme to obtain an average quality point value (QPV) of at least 2.00 in the areas of English, *Gaeilge* and Mathematics in each of the three module groupings listed below:
1. Language and Literacy 1; Language and Literacy 2; Language and Literacy 3; English component of Language and Literacy 4; English component of Language and Literacy 5
 2. *An Ghaeilge agus Múineadh na Gaeilge 1; An Ghaeilge agus Múineadh na Gaeilge 2; An Ghaeilge agus Múineadh na Gaeilge 3; Gaeilge* component of Language and Literacy 4; *Gaeilge* component of Language and Literacy 5, *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 1; Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 2*
 3. STEM 1; STEM 2; STEM 4; STEM 5
- 3.5.1.20 A student who does not obtain the minimum average QPV required in Mathematics following annual repeats in Year 2 but who is otherwise eligible to progress may do so and may link in on a capped basis to relevant modules in the following academic year to obtain the average minimum QPV of 2.00 in that module grouping.
- 3.5.1.21 Students who receive an F grade in the Maths component of the module STEM 5 shall be awarded an F grade both in that component of the module and in the overall module.
- 3.5.1.22 Where the student has passed the other element(s) of the module STEM 5, they repeat only the Maths component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.1.23 A student who is not eligible to progress following the annual repeats in Year 3 on account of not having attained the minimum average QPV required in one or more of the English, *Gaeilge* or Mathematics groupings but who otherwise satisfies the general progression regulations may link in to relevant module(s) in the following academic year subject to the current academic

regulations whereby a maximum of two modules can be taken on a link-in basis in each semester.

3.5.1.24 An absolute minimum QPV of 2.60 across school placement modules is required for the award of a first or second class honours degree.

3.5.2 Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching)

3.5.2.1 A student who fails a school placement module shall be awarded an F grade or, in the case of Pass/Fail registration, an N grade.

3.5.2.2 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for school placement modules.

3.5.2.3 Save in exceptional circumstances, where a student fails a school placement, they shall be afforded only one further opportunity to repeat that placement.

3.5.2.4 A student who fails a school placement module (i.e. who fails the first attempt and also fails the repeat attempt) or who seeks to withdraw from a school placement module will normally have their enrolment on their current programme of study terminated. Students who are due to start professional placement in the Spring semester of years 1 and 2 of the programme are subject to critical review:

- A student who has deficient grades (including I grades) in more than three modules or whose residual QCA following the Autumn semester is less than 2.00 will normally not be allowed to progress to the Spring semester and will be required to repeat the Autumn semester prior to progressing to the Spring semester.

or

- A student who has a deficient grade in the Autumn school placement module in Year 1 will normally not be allowed to progress to the Spring semester.

3.5.2.5 An absolute minimum QPV of 2.60 across school placement modules is required for the award of a first or second class honours master's degree.

3.5.2.6 To obtain the master's degree award, students are required by the end of the programme to obtain an average QPV of at least 2.00 in the areas of English, *Gaeilge* and Mathematics in each of the three module groupings listed below:

- Language and Literacy 1; Language and Literacy 2
- *An Ghaeilge agus Múineadh na Gaeilge 1; An Ghaeilge agus Múineadh na Gaeilge 2; Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 1; Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 2*
- Maths Education 1; Maths Education 2

3.5.2.7 A student who does not obtain the minimum average QPV required in one or more of the English, *Gaeilge* or Mathematics groupings following the annual repeats in Year 2 may link in to the relevant module(s) in the following academic year subject to the programme running and subject to the current academic regulations whereby a maximum of two modules can be taken on a link-in basis in each semester.

3.5.2.8 A student who fails the oral Irish examination component of the following modules shall be awarded an F grade in the overall module:

- *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 1*
- *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 2*

3.5.2.9 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for the oral Irish examination component of these *Gaeltacht* modules.

- 3.5.2.10 Where a student fails the module but passes only the placement component, they repeat only the oral Irish examination component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.2.11 Where a student fails the placement component of the following modules, they shall be awarded an F grade in the overall module:
- *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 1*
 - *Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht 2*
- 3.5.2.12 Where a student fails the module but passes only the oral Irish examination component, they repeat only the placement component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.
- 3.5.2.13 A student who fails a professional placement module (i.e. who fails the first attempt and also fails the repeat attempt) in years 1 or 2 will be eligible for consideration, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, for an exit award or for transfer to an appropriate exit programme, as listed below. The award type will depend on the number of credits accumulated by the student.
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education Studies (Major Award (Level 9) [$\geq 60 + < 90$ ECTS])
 - MA Education Studies (Major Award (Level 9) [≥ 90 ECTS])
- 3.5.2.14 A student who is eligible for an exit award may take the appropriate award based on accumulated credits or may link in to approved modules in an attempt to fulfil the requirements for the next higher award. The approved modules will be determined following consultation with the student, the relevant Dean(s) and the Vice-President Academic Affairs.
- 3.5.3 *Bachelor of Arts in Education***
- 3.5.3.1 A student who fails a school placement module shall be awarded an F grade.
- 3.5.3.2 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for school placement modules.
- 3.5.3.3 Save in exceptional circumstances, where a student fails a school placement, they shall be afforded only one further opportunity to repeat that placement.
- 3.5.3.4 A student who fails a school placement module (i.e. who fails the first attempt and also fails the repeat attempt) will normally have their enrolment on their current programme of study terminated.
- 3.5.3.5 A student who fails a school placement module (i.e. who fails the first attempt and also fails the repeat attempt) or who seeks to withdraw from a school placement module in years 2, 3 or 4 will be eligible for consideration, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, for an exit award or transfer to an appropriate exit programme, as listed below. The award type will depend on the number of credits accumulated by the student.
- Certificate in Education Studies (Minor Award (Level 7) [$\geq 60 + < 120$ ECTS])
 - Diploma in Education Studies (Minor Award (Level 7) [$\geq 120 + < 180$ ECTS])
 - BA Education Studies (Major Award (Level 7) [$\geq 180 + < 240$ ECTS])
 - BA Education Studies (Major Award (Level 8) [≥ 240 ECTS])
- 3.5.3.6 A student who is eligible for an exit award may take the appropriate award based on accumulated credits or may link in to approved modules in an attempt to fulfil the requirements for the next higher award. The approved modules will be determined following consultation between the student, the relevant Dean(s) and the Vice-President Academic Affairs.
- 3.5.3.7 Students who are due to start professional placement in the Spring semester of years 2 or 3 of the programme are subject to critical review. A student who, following the Autumn semester of

Year 2 or Year 3, has deficient grades (including I grades) in three or more modules or whose residual QCA is less than 2.00 will normally not be allowed to progress to the Spring semester and will be required to repeat the Autumn semester prior to progressing to the Spring semester.

- 3.5.3.8 An absolute minimum QPV of 2.60 across school placement modules (School Placement 1, School Placement 2 and School Placement 3) is required for the award of a first or second class honours degree.

Gaeilge Subjects

- 3.5.3.9 Students who receive an F grade in the oral Irish component of the following modules shall be awarded an F grade both in that component of the module and in the overall module:

- GAP4712 *Teanga agus Litríocht na Gaeilge 2*
- LDP4720 *Na Mná i Litríocht na Gaeilge*
- GAP4728 *Prós na Gaeilge*

- 3.5.3.10 Where the student has passed the other elements of the module, they repeat only the oral Irish component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.

- 3.5.3.11 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for the oral component of the module.

3.5.4 BA in Early Childhood, Care and Education

- 3.5.4.1 A student who fails a professional placement module shall be awarded an F grade.

- 3.5.4.2 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for professional placement modules.

- 3.5.4.3 A student who fails a professional placement module in years 1, 2, 3 or 4 and who wishes to exit the programme or who seeks to withdraw from a professional placement module will be eligible for consideration, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, for an exit award or transfer to an appropriate exit programme, as listed below. The award type will depend on the number of credits accumulated by the student.

- Certificate in Early Childhood Studies (Minor Award (Level 7) [$\geq 60 + < 120$ ECTS])
- Diploma in Early Childhood Studies (Minor Award (Level 7) [$\geq 120 + < 180$ ECTS])
- BA Early Childhood Studies (Major Award (Level 7) [$\geq 180 + < 240$ ECTS])
- BA Hons. Early Childhood Studies (Major Award (Level 8) [≥ 240 ECTS])

- 3.5.4.4 A student who is eligible for an exit award may take the appropriate award based on accumulated credits or may link in to approved modules in an attempt to fulfil the requirements for the next higher award. The approved modules will be determined following consultation between the student, the relevant Dean(s) and the Vice-President Academic Affairs.

- 3.5.4.5 Students who are due to start professional placement in the Spring semester of years 1 and 4 of the programmes are subject to critical review. A student who, following the Autumn semester of years 1 and 4, has deficient grades in three or more modules or whose residual QCA is less than 2.00 will normally not be allowed to progress to the Spring semester of years 1 and 4 and will be required to repeat the Autumn semester prior to progressing to the Spring semester.

3.5.5 Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

- 3.5.5.1 Standard requirements for a professional doctorate are specified in chapter 2, Marks and Standards ([MS 2.9](#)). The following programme-specific academic regulations apply to the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme.

- 3.5.5.2 Save in exceptional circumstances, one opportunity is normally provided to repeat one professional placement module.
- 3.5.5.3 A fail grade on a repeat or subsequent professional placement will normally result in the termination of the student's enrolment, irrespective of performance on any other component of the programme.
- 3.5.5.4 Permission to repeat a professional placement is at the discretion of the Course Board, which will make its decision with due regard to the student's rights and the College's duty of care to the public.
- 3.5.5.5 Students who are awarded a fail grade in a professional placement module will normally repeat the entire module. In exceptional cases, the Course Board may vary the requirement to repeat the entire module.
- 3.5.5.6 All students are subject to critical review at the end of the Spring semesters of Year 1 and Year 2. Students whose residual QCA is less than 3.00 cannot progress to the following academic year.
- 3.5.5.7 A student who does not obtain a minimum cumulative QCA of 3.00 ([MS 2.9](#)) will be eligible for consideration, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, for an exit award or transfer to an appropriate exit programme, as listed below. The award type will depend on the number of credits accumulated by the student.
- Diploma in Educational and Child Psychology Studies (Minor Award (Level 9) [$\geq 60 + < 120$ ECTS])
 - MA in Educational and Child Psychology Studies (Major Award (Level 9) [$\geq 120 + < 180$ ECTS])
- 3.5.5.8 Save in exceptional circumstances, one opportunity is normally provided to repeat one Personal and Professional Development module, and students may not progress on the programme until that F grade is cleared.
- 3.5.5.9 A fail grade on a repeat or subsequent Personal and Professional Development module will normally result in the termination of the student's enrolment, irrespective of performance on any other component of the programme.

3.6 Faculty of Arts

3.6.1 Language Subjects

- 3.6.1.1 Students who fail the oral component of the modules listed below shall be awarded an F grade both in that component of the module and in the overall module:
- FR4732 French Language and Culture
 - FR4742 French for Beginners II
 - GA4712 *Teanga agus Litríocht na Gaeilge 2*
 - LD4720 *Na Mná i Litríocht na Gaeilge*
 - GA4728 *Prós na Nua-Ghaeilge*
 - GE4702 German Ab Initio 2
 - GE4712 German Language, Culture and Society 2
 - GE4714 German Language and Linguistics 2
 - GE4718 German Language and Linguistics 4
- 3.6.1.2 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for oral components of the above modules.
- 3.6.1.3 Where the student has passed the other elements of the module, they repeat only the oral component. The student is capped on the repeat of the module at grade C3.

3.6.2 ***Psychology***

3.6.2.1 For students taking the subject Psychology to degree level, semesters 3 to 5 shall be assigned a relative weighting of 1 and semesters 6 to 8 shall be assigned a relative weighting of 2.

3.6.2.2 The compensating fail grades D1 and D2 shall not be awarded for the following modules:

- PS4003 Research, Design and Methodology I
- PS4024 Information Technology in Psychology
- PS4005 Research, Design and Methodology II

3.6.3 ***Off-Campus Placement***

3.6.3.1 Students who have undertaken placement on the third year on the Bachelor of Arts will progress to the final year of the programme in advance of their placement result being ratified.

4. Supporting Procedures

4.1 Assessment

4.1.1 End-of-Semester Assessment Scheduling

- 4.1.1.1 End-of-semester assessments ([MS 2.1](#)), where required, may be held in the two-week period following the end of student study time in the semester in which the module is taught. The academic staff member responsible for a module that requires such an assessment slot shall enter these requirements in the Examinations Requirements Form by end of Week 2 of that semester. A request to provide this information will issue from the Student Academic Administration Office.
- 4.1.1.2 The Student Academic Administration Office shall schedule and administer an assessment period, of maximum duration 2.5 hours, for each such module. (Special exemption for an examination of longer duration may be requested from *An Chomhairle Acadúil* by application to the office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs.)
- 4.1.1.3 The provisional schedule of end-of-semester assessments shall be published by the Student Academic Administration Office to the campus community no later than Monday of Week 8 of each semester. The schedule will be displayed on the [Examinations page](#) of the College website. The class representatives shall immediately notify the academic staff member responsible for the module of any genuine difficulty students may have with the provisional schedule. The academic staff member shall notify the Student Academic Administration Office of any such difficulties before 15:00 on Thursday of Week 8.
- 4.1.1.4 In as far as is feasible, the Student Academic Administration Office will adjust the provisional schedule to resolve such notified difficulties, taking account of any alternative solutions proposed by the academic staff member(s) concerned. The phrase 'genuine difficulty' shall include cases where three assessments for a student are provisionally scheduled on the same day and where a student is provisionally scheduled to take more than one assessment in the same assessment period.
- 4.1.1.5 The final schedule of end-of-semester assessments shall be displayed on the [Examinations page](#) of the College website. Academic staff will be notified of this by Monday of Week 10.
- 4.1.1.6 End-of-semester assessments shall be conducted in accordance with the regulations specified in [Appendix 1](#).

4.1.2 Preparing/Printing Assessment Materials

- 4.1.2.1 Academic staff members shall comply with any procedures and deadlines their academic department has in place regarding the preparation and printing of assessment materials ([AR 1.4.4](#) and [MS 2.1](#)). In the case of end-of-semester assessments, these procedures and deadlines shall be designed to comply with the requirements at 4.1.2.2, 4.1.2.3 and 4.1.2.4 below.
- 4.1.2.2 Examination papers (and any special answer sheet/cards/attachments) must be received by the Student Academic Administration Office by Monday of Week 11.
- 4.1.2.3 In all cases, a clear written instruction as to the timing and order of distribution/collection of items during the assessment shall be completed on the official cover sheet and secured to the front.
- 4.1.2.4 All assessment papers shall contain standard header information.

4.1.3 Academic Staff Attendance at End-of-Semester Assessments

- 4.1.3.1 The academic staff member responsible for a module or their nominee shall be present at the scheduled examination venue of the end-of-semester module assessment for the first 30

minutes of the scheduled assessment time to respond to queries. Where the final schedule lists more than one examination venue for the module assessment, the academic staff member or nominee shall attend at the main venues listed on the final examination schedule. The academic staff member or nominee is required to present Mary Immaculate College staff identification to invigilation staff prior to entering the examination venue.

4.1.3.2 Where the academic staff member is required to make a material change in the assessment due to an error, they shall write out the change and give it to the invigilator responsible for the examination venue. The invigilator will ensure that the announcement is made as soon as possible in all venues in which the assessment is being held. The invigilator will take note of the announcement and will retain this note with the other invigilator records of the assessment.

4.1.3.3 The academic staff member responsible for the module or their nominee may return to the examination venue at the scheduled completion time of the assessment to sign for and take possession of the students' completed assessment materials. Alternatively, the relevant academic staff member or nominee may, following presentation of Mary Immaculate College staff identification, collect the completed assessment material from the Student Academic Administration Office.

4.1.4 Academic Cheating

4.1.4.1 Academic cheating is defined as a serious disciplinary offence under the College's Code of Student Conduct.

4.1.4.2 Anyone who believes that they see a student attempting to cheat or cheating during a scheduled end-of-semester assessment shall immediately inform an invigilator in the examination venue of the time and nature of the allegation and shall indicate to the invigilator where the student concerned is seated. The invigilator is then required to follow the procedure specified in the Breach of Assessment Regulations forms used to record such an allegation. The procedure permits the student concerned to continue with the assessment. The Chief Invigilator shall refer all such allegations to the Student Academic Administration Office immediately following the assessment concerned. All allegations and complaints are considered by procedures as stipulated under the College's Code of Student Conduct.

4.1.4.3 Anyone who believes they see a student attempting to cheat or cheating during an assessment other than a scheduled end-of-semester assessment shall immediately inform the academic staff member responsible for the module. The academic staff member shall inform the student concerned of the allegation. (If it is the academic staff member who believes an incident of cheating has occurred, they shall similarly inform the student concerned.) Where possible, the academic staff member shall mark the student's assessment answer material or otherwise indicate in writing at what stage of the assessment the allegation was made. In all cases, the student shall then be permitted to continue with the assessment.

4.1.4.4 Immediately following the assessment, the academic staff member shall send written details of the allegation to the Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs and/or the relevant nominee. The written notification shall include the student's name and ID number and the name of any witness. All allegations and complaints are considered by procedures as stipulated under the College's Code of Student Conduct.

4.1.4.5 An academic staff member who believes that a student has cheated based on an examination of the student's assessment answer materials (from a scheduled end-of-semester assessment or any other type of assessment) shall immediately write out a detailed allegation, including the student's name and ID number, and send it to the Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs and/or the relevant nominee. All allegations and complaints are considered by procedures as stipulated under the College's Code of Student Conduct.

4.2 Grading

4.2.1 Grading Lists

4.2.1.1 A grading list, listing each student registered in a module in the current semester, is available from the Student Records System or the Faculty Office for the academic staff member responsible for the module.

4.2.1.2 The academic staff member responsible for the module shall ensure that:

- a) The final grade each student has achieved in the module is submitted on the grading list
- b) The name, ID number and grade of any student who is not included on the list but who has been assessed in the module in the current semester should be recorded and notified to the Student Academic Administration Office

4.2.2 Submission of Grades

4.2.2.1 The academic staff member responsible for the module shall review the completed grading list and shall submit final grades to the Student Records System.

4.2.2.2 The Head of Department or nominee shall review the grades submitted by the academic staff member to ensure compliance with the College's regulations. If deemed necessary, grades may be returned to the academic staff member.

4.2.2.3 Academic staff members are encouraged to submit grades at the earliest opportunity following the completion of assessments in a module. Heads of Department shall make every effort to support academic staff to do so.

4.2.2.4 The precise dates and deadlines in each semester will be confirmed to all members of academic staff by the Student Academic Administration Office.

4.2.2.5 The grades that can be awarded are listed in the Marks and Standards chapter ([MS 2.5.2](#)). Academic staff members should refer to their Head of Department for more detailed guidance on the standard of performance required for the award of each grade. The student registration type listed on the class and grading lists on the Student Records System has the following implications for the type of grade for which the student is eligible.

Table 4.1: Student Registration Type

Reg. Type	Meaning	Associated Grades
N	Normal registration	Award any grade except G, EX, R, RE, W, X, S, Y
P	Pass/Fail registration	Award grade P (Pass) or N (Fail) only
G	Audit registration	Award G or NG only
No cap	Repeat registration	Award appropriate academic grade
Cap	Repeat registration type where the grade is capped	Award appropriate academic grade. The system will cap to a maximum of C3 while maintaining an audit record of the actual grade awarded.
I clear	Registration to clear I grade	Award appropriate academic grade

4.2.3 I Grades

4.2.3.1 The College supports students who find themselves in an immediate crisis and, where relevant, takes actions to avert recurrence.

4.2.3.2 An I grade shall be awarded only in cases where the student has not completed all of the requirements for the module and has submitted certifiable evidence of medical and/or

psychological illness or immediate family crisis where the presence of the student is indispensable. An I grade shall not be assigned in response to pleas of pressure of work.

- 4.2.3.3 Students must submit satisfactory evidence to support the request for an I grade, and such certification is valid only when it comes via the Medical Centre, Counselling or Chaplaincy service. In the case of illness, the appropriate service determines what constitutes satisfactory medical evidence, and students are required to give their consent to this service to seek clarification and/or verification from the certifying doctor if the service deems it necessary to do so. Students submitting medical certification must request their GP to complete the relevant section of the I Grade Application Form. The completed form must be submitted to the Student Academic Administration Office. To meet grading deadlines, the I Grade Application Form and certificates must normally be lodged within five working days of the student's relevant end-of-semester examinations. The certificate must be dated and, in the case of illness/incapacity, must include reference to the period and nature of the illness and state that the student is not fit to sit examinations. Students should not attempt to sit examinations if unfit to do so. If students knowingly decide to undertake part or all of an examination while unwell, their chances of subsequently obtaining an I grade will be jeopardised.
- 4.2.3.4 Students are required to bring the relevant module codes and date and time of their examinations when presenting to the Medical Centre, Counselling or Chaplaincy services. Failure to bring this information will require a second appointment.
- 4.2.3.5 Students seeking an I grade must contact the Student Academic Administration Office. The provision of certification will be a necessary but not automatic basis for the award of an I grade. Certification on the grounds of family bereavement must come via the chaplaincy/health services. All I grade applications must be made to the relevant service within five working days of the relevant end-of-semester examinations in order to meet grading deadlines.
- 4.2.3.6 On receipt of an I grade application and based on the supporting documentation provided, the College's I Grade Committee will determine the award of I grades.
- 4.2.3.7 Students shall normally clear all I grades no later than the annual repeat period following the award of the I grade. A student who receives an I grade shall contact the academic staff member responsible for the module immediately following the publication of the grade to determine how the outstanding requirements are to be completed. The academic staff member responsible for the module shall determine how best the student can satisfy the outstanding requirements. If the academic staff member is unavailable, the student should contact the appropriate Head of Department for a decision. An I grade received during the annual repeat period is administered as per regulation 4.2.3.13.
- 4.2.3.8 An I grade in a module that is a required part of a student's programme must be replaced by an appropriate academic grade prior to progression to the next year of study or graduation.
- 4.2.3.9 The following range of assessment instruments is available to members of academic staff in facilitating the clearance of I grades:
- a) An evaluation of the work submitted by the student to date together with their general performance in the module to date
 - b) An adequately documented *viva voce* examination
 - c) Performance in sequential or linked modules
 - d) Evidence of mastery of concepts or skills that can be obtained from performance in modules related to that in which the I grade has been awarded. As part of the grade review process, the academic staff member may require the student to submit additional work by way of, for example, the submission of an essay.
 - e) Formal examination

- 4.2.3.10 Where a formal examination is the chosen mechanism, this is to be administered by the Student Academic Administration Office during the annual repeats.
- 4.2.3.11 I grade(s) will not be counted in the maximum permissible number of modules that a student is allowed to repeat.
- 4.2.3.12 a) All clearance grades will be processed following the annual repeats only.
b) In the case of prospective graduating students, clearance of I grades awarded from the Autumn semester only may be processed either before the Spring Examination Board or after the annual repeats.
- 4.2.3.13 Students who receive a second I grade for the same module(s) in the annual repeats (up to a maximum of two modules in any one semester) will be permitted to clear the module(s) on a link-in and uncapped basis during the following academic year.
- 4.2.3.14 Students who receive an I grade for the first time in a module during the annual repeats will retain their original grade.

4.2.4 M Grades

- 4.2.4.1 An M grade shall be awarded only in the case of sequential modules approved for such grading by the Vice-President Academic Affairs prior to the commencement of the sequence and satisfying the following conditions:
- a) Normally, there shall be no more than two modules in an M-graded sequence.
 - b) The Vice-President Academic Affairs will need to be satisfied that there is a sound pedagogic reason for assessing over two modules.
 - c) The Vice-President Academic Affairs will need to be satisfied that students, on whose programmes the module sequence is a requirement, do not have an excessive number of M-graded modules in the relevant semesters.
 - d) Both modules in the sequence shall be offered in consecutive semesters of the same academic year.
 - e) To provide feedback to students, an interim assessment may take place by the end of the first semester of the M-graded sequence, which may be worth at least 20% of the total grade in the module.
 - f) Normally, both modules may be taught and coordinated by the same academic staff member(s).
 - g) Credits shall be awarded only at the end of the sequence.
 - h) The final grade awarded shall be the same in each semester in which the M-graded sequence occurred. In exceptional circumstances, such as in the case of the major project module, the award of different grades in each of the semesters may be permitted.

4.2.5 NG Grades

- 4.2.5.1 NG grades (non-submission of assessment material) should be awarded only in cases where a student has submitted no assessment material for a module and no certification has been received to support the award of an I grade.

4.2.6 Repeat Grades

- 4.2.6.1 Grades awarded at the annual repeats will be capped at C3. In such cases, the higher of the original grade and repeat grade will stand.
- 4.2.6.2 Grades awarded to students repeating a maximum of two modules per semester on a link-in basis will not be capped. In such cases, the higher of the original grade and the repeat grade will stand. For the avoidance of doubt, where a module that is repeated on a link-in basis is further repeated at the annual repeats, the grade awarded for the latter will be capped at C3, provided that in such circumstances the higher of the original grade and the repeat grade will stand.

4.2.7 Grading of Modules Taken in Partner Institutions

- 4.2.7.1 Mary Immaculate College encourages students to participate in placements in other academic institutions, both nationally and internationally. To this end, the College may recognise grades awarded by the partner institution and award credits accordingly.
- 4.2.7.2 An institutional agreement shall be in place before Mary Immaculate College students participate in placements in other institutions. Such agreements shall be executed only in the case of institutions that are compatible with Mary Immaculate College.
- 4.2.7.3 A learning agreement and grade translation agreement shall be in place in advance of student exchange/placement. Learning agreements shall be executed only in the case of courses that are compatible with Mary Immaculate College.
- 4.2.7.4 Up to 50% of part 2 of an academic programme can be taken in partner institutions, i.e. a total of three of the six semesters in part 2, including Placement. This would be an upper limit. Placement on programmes such as Erasmus is limited to a total of one academic year. A more restrictive policy may operate at individual programme level.
- 4.2.7.5 Programme coordinators or nominee of academic programmes that require students to undertake a compulsory placement in a partner institution shall ensure that the precise parameters are specified in the programme documentation approved by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. Programme coordinators or nominee of academic programmes that offer students the option of a placement in a partner institution shall, following consultation with the International Office or Placement Office, as appropriate, seek relevant Course Board approval of the proposed placement.
- 4.2.7.6 The International Office shall be consulted in relation to the proposed parameters for studying abroad in new courses or during the revision of existing courses prior to approval being sought in accordance with regulation 4.2.7.5.
- 4.2.7.7 In conjunction with the Placement Office, the Head of Department shall approve an individual student's participation in a placement in another institution.
- 4.2.7.8 In advance of the study abroad placement, the exchange coordinator or equivalent shall advise students registered on Mary Immaculate College academic programmes incorporating modules exempted by professional bodies of any implications for exemptions, postgraduate study, etc.
- 4.2.7.9 Students are expected to spend their final year at Mary Immaculate College. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the programme coordinator and exchange coordinators.
- 4.2.7.10 Unless otherwise approved by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, the following arrangements shall apply in relation to the grading of students undertaking placements in partner institutions:
- a) Final-year modules taken in a partner institution, including any final-year modules taken in lieu of off-campus placement, should be quality graded.
 - b) Students undertaking a compulsory placement shall be graded on a pass/fail basis in all years prior to their final year of study.
 - c) Students undertaking an elective placement in all years prior to their final year of study shall be graded on either a pass/fail or quality-graded basis. The grading type for the placement will be determined in advance of the placement following consultation between the programme coordinator and the student and subsequent approval by the Course Board.
 - d) With the exception of final-year modules (which should be graded in accordance with item a above), modules taken abroad in lieu of off-campus placement should be graded Pass/Fail.

4.2.7.11 All assessments should be completed before a Mary Immaculate College student leaves the host institution. In addition, the onus is on individual students, in consultation with their exchange coordinators, to ensure that arrangements are in place for the transmission of grades from their host institution to the relevant office in Mary Immaculate College.

4.2.7.12 The exchange coordinator or nominee shall advise the Student Academic Administration Office and the International Office of the study abroad arrangements for individual students.

4.2.8 Grade Changes

4.2.8.1 In exceptional cases, a grade may be changed after the original grade has been approved by the Faculty Examination Board. Such grade alteration may occur when an academic staff member:

- a) Discovers an error in the grade
- b) Reviews overall or individual performance in a module on the advice of the external examiner
- c) Reviews an individual grade in response to a grade recheck request in accordance with section 4.2.9
- d) Reviews an individual grade in response to a grade appeal request in accordance with section 4.2.10
- e) Reviews an individual grade in response to a request from the Head of Department or nominee

4.2.8.2 In cases where the grade change places the student in another final award classification category, the programme coordinator and/or Head of Department should ensure that the external examiner is consulted.

4.2.8.3 The academic staff member shall complete and sign the appropriate grade alteration form. The reason for the alteration shall be stated on the form. The signature of the Head of Department or nominee is required before the form can be submitted to the Student Academic Administration Office for processing.

4.2.9 Grade Recheck

4.2.9.1 Should a student consider that they may have been assigned an incorrect grade, they may request a recheck of the grade within two weeks of the relevant semester results becoming available.

4.2.9.2 To request a recheck, the student must complete the appropriate form (available on the College's Student Portal) and pay a fee, the amount of which shall be decided by the Vice-President Academic Affairs.

4.2.9.3 A grade recheck cannot be carried out on those parts of an assessment where a sufficient and intact record of the original assessment is not available. This includes assessments where the original submission by the student does not remain under the control of the College or where sufficient records are not available to permit regrading.

4.2.9.4 The following procedure should be followed by the academic staff member responsible for the relevant module:

- a) Review the examination documentation and the original assignment submission(s), where available.
- b) Regrade the examination documentation and assignment to establish whether or not the original mark/grade awarded was correct. Where a sufficient and intact record of the original assignment is not available, the original mark/grade assigned to that element of the assessment remains.
- c) Check to ensure that marks given to individual elements of the assessment are included in the total marks.

- d) Check that the original total mark, where applicable, is accurate and that the grade awarded is correct.

4.2.9.5 Where the decision is to change the grade, the academic staff member shall pass the form to the Head of Department for the Head's authorisation, and the Head of Department shall return the signed form to the Student Academic Administration Office or Faculty of Education Office, as appropriate.

4.2.9.6 Within three weeks of the publication of results for the semester in which the request is lodged, the academic staff member shall return the recheck request form to the Student Academic Administration Office or Faculty of Education Office, as appropriate, with their decision noted on it.

4.2.9.7 It should be noted that, should the grade recheck so determine, grades may be changed to lower or higher grades.

4.2.10 Grade Appeal

4.2.10.1 Should the student not be satisfied with the outcome of the grade recheck, they may appeal the matter to the Head of Department responsible for the module. The appeal must be made within two weeks of the publication of the grade recheck result.

4.2.10.2 To appeal a grade recheck, the student must complete the appropriate form (available on the College's Student Portal) and pay a fee, the amount of which shall be decided by the Vice-President Academic Affairs. The appeal must be on stated grounds and should include a full and complete statement on why the student believes the grade awarded is incorrect.

4.2.10.3 A grade appeal cannot be carried out on those parts of an assessment where a satisfactory record of the original assessment is not available. This includes assessments where the original submission by the student does not remain under the control of Mary Immaculate College or where sufficient records are not available to permit regrading.

4.2.10.4 The following procedure should be followed by the Head of Department or nominee when dealing with grade appeals:

- a) Review the stated grounds on the grade appeal request.
- b) Regrade the relevant examination documents or other assessment work with reference to the stated grounds of appeal. Where a sufficient record of the original assignment is not available, the original mark/grade assigned to that element of the assessment remains.
- c) Check to ensure that marks given to individual elements of the examination are included in the total marks.
- d) Check that the original total mark is accurate and that the grade awarded is correct.

4.2.10.5 The Head of Department shall return the appeal request form to the Student Academic Administration Office or Faculty of Education Office, as appropriate, with their decision noted on it, within three weeks of receipt of the grade appeal request.

4.2.10.6 It should be noted that, should the grade appeal so determine, grades may be changed to lower or higher grades.

4.3 Student Progression

4.3.1 Quality Credit Average (QCA)

4.3.1.1 The semester quality credit average (QCA) represents the average quality of a student's performance in all modules taken in one semester. The cumulative QCA represents the average quality of a student's performance in all modules taken to date in a particular programme of study.

- 4.3.1.2 Semester QCA is calculated using the following formula (where QCS = quality credit score, Att Hrs = attempted hours and Non-Q hours = non-quality hours).

$$\frac{\text{Sum of QCS}}{(\text{Sum of Att Hrs}) - (\text{Sum of Non-Q hours})}$$

Note 1: The QCS score for a particular module is the QPV score for that module multiplied by the module credit value (e.g. 3). The QPV score is a numerical value assigned to grades A1 to NG on a scale from 4 to 0.

Note 2: Each year of study of a programme is given a factor weighting. For programmes that include a three-year part 2, Year 2 carries a factor weighting of 1 while years 3 and 4 each carry a factor of 2.

Refer to the Calculating QCA section of the [Student Handbook](#) for a detailed explanation of how cumulative and semester QCA are calculated.

4.3.2 Faculty Examination Boards

- 4.3.2.1 The Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee shall convene a Faculty Examination Board to review, each semester, the grades awarded to each student in the programme(s) assigned to that board for consideration.

- 4.3.2.2 In all cases, Faculty Examination Boards shall comprise the relevant heads of department, programme coordinators, specialist academic staff and relevant staff responsible for teaching the modules graded in the semester under consideration.

- 4.3.2.3 The Faculty Examination Boards shall convene each semester in advance of the meetings of *An Chomhairle Acadúil* and the Academic Council of the University of Limerick. ([AR 1.5.2](#))

- 4.3.2.4 The Faculty Examination Boards shall decide on the progress of students within the marginal performance limits specified in sections 4.3.5, 4.3.6 and 4.3.7.

- 4.3.2.5 The Faculty Examination Boards shall apply any programme-specific regulations specified in chapter 3 of this handbook.

4.3.3 Minimum Performance Standards

- 4.3.3.1 Minimum performance standards are specified in regulation [AR 1.5.3](#). A Faculty Examination Board normally allows a student to complete one full academic year of a programme before formally reviewing their progress with a view to determining whether or not they should proceed. The Faculty Examination Board formally reviews the progress of students at the end of each academic year of a programme, at the end of the final academic semester of a part of a programme, prior to placement or other professional placement and following the annual repeats.

- 4.3.3.2 Students whose academic performance conforms to the minimum standards are permitted to proceed.

- 4.3.3.3 At the end of each semester, the Student Academic Administration Office or Faculty of Education Office, as appropriate, produces reports that summarise the performance of each student. Regulations 4.3.5.1, 4.3.6.1 and 4.3.7.1 below specify the critical categories of students about whose progression Faculty Examination Boards are required to make recommendations.

- 4.3.3.4 Students who do not achieve the minimum standard outlined in regulation [AR 1.5.3](#) will be advised by the Student Academic Administration Office or Faculty of Education Office, as appropriate, of all the options available to them (as detailed in 4.3.6.2 and 4.3.7.2).

- 4.3.3.5 A student who has access to a link-in option may decide to decline the offer of linking in and instead choose to repeat the semester or year in an effort to improve their overall QCA.
- 4.3.3.6 Students are required to identify the option they will avail of from the list of options and reply by a date specified by the Student Academic Administration Office. Applications to repeat are noted at the September Student Status Committee.

4.3.4 Progression

- 4.3.4.1 The outcomes of Faculty Examination Board decisions on progression are conveyed to the students by the Student Academic Administration Office or Faculty of Education Office, as appropriate.
- 4.3.4.2 No additional provisions will be made for visiting students.

4.3.5 Progression Following Autumn Semester

- 4.3.5.1 Students due to start school or professional placement in the Spring semester may be subject to critical review ([PSR 3.5.1.7](#)).
- 4.3.5.2 The Faculty Examination Boards may specify modules to be repeated by non-progressing students.
- 4.3.5.3 Eligibility for access to the annual repeats is based on a residual QCA of at least 2.00.

4.3.6 Progression Following Spring Semester

- 4.3.6.1 All students are subject to critical review in the Spring semester. Progression to off-campus placement is automatic except in cases where students are required to repeat the year or part thereof.
- 4.3.6.2 Students who do not achieve the minimum standard outlined in regulation [AR 1.5.3](#) shall, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, be permitted to do one of the following:
- Take annual repeats for a maximum of four modules in any two-semester academic year
 - Repeat a full semester
 - Repeat the full year
 - Have their enrolment terminated
- 4.3.6.3 The Faculty Examination Board may specify modules to be repeated by non-progressing students.
- 4.3.6.4 Eligibility for access to the annual repeats is based on a residual QCA of at least 2.00.

4.3.7 Progression Following Annual Repeats

- 4.3.7.1 All students who registered for annual repeats are subject to critical review following the annual repeats.
- 4.3.7.2 Students who do not achieve the minimum standard outlined in regulation [AR 1.5.3](#) shall, at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Examination Board, be permitted to do one of the following:
- Repeat a maximum of two modules with deficient or compensating fail grades in any one semester on a link-in basis
 - Repeat a full semester
 - Repeat the full year
 - Have their enrolment terminated

4.4 Student Status Committee

4.4.1 Composition

4.4.1.1 The Student Status Committee comprises the Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee, Deans and Assistant Deans of the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education, Director of School Placement/Professional Placement, two representatives from the Faculty of Arts and two representatives from the Faculty of Education, Graduate School Director and a representative from Mary Immaculate College Thurles, or nominees in each case.

4.4.2 Functions

4.4.2.1 The Student Status Committees must operate within the parameters laid down in the Academic Regulations and Marks and Standards chapters of this handbook.

4.4.2.2 The Student Status Committees deal with the following applications ([AR 1.2.5](#)):

- a) Application for readmission
- b) Application for leave of absence
- c) Application for return from leave of absence
- d) Application for internal transfer
- e) Application for external transfer
- f) Application for exemptions from modules
- g) Application for exemption from off-campus placement
- h) Application to repeat a year/semester

4.4.2.3 The decision of the Student Status Committees in relation to such applications shall be final.

4.4.3 Schedule

4.4.3.1 The committees shall convene not later than:

- a) Autumn semester business: Wednesday of Week 2, Spring semester
- b) Spring semester business: Wednesday, six weeks after grade submission deadline
- c) Annual repeats business: Wednesday of Week 2, Autumn semester

and at other times as deemed necessary by the Vice-President Academic Affairs.

4.4.3.2 The Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee shall convene and chair the Student Status Committee meeting. The meeting is designed to (i) make decisions in accordance with the academic regulations and associated procedures, (ii) facilitate the exchange of information and (iii) provide an opportunity for a review of the norms being applied across the College.

4.4.4 Procedures

4.4.4.1 Application forms and advice on eligibility for consideration of all student requests for a review of their status are available from the Student Academic Administration Office.

4.4.4.2 Students whose status has been changed by a Faculty Examination Board are informed by the Student Academic Administration Office or Faculty of Education Office, as appropriate.

4.4.4.3 All applications must be lodged by the relevant deadline set by the Student Academic Administration Office.

4.4.4.4 All applications shall be considered at the first available sitting of the relevant Student Status Committee.

4.4.4.5 In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to obtain a decision on an application before the next available sitting of the relevant Student Status Committee. Where this occurs, the Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee shall be responsible for making a decision. The Vice-President Academic Affairs may decide to seek the views of other members of the committee before making a decision.

- 4.4.4.6 On occasion, a student is required to attend the relevant Student Status Committee meeting. The Students' Union representative may accompany the student if the student so desires.
- 4.4.4.7 The Student Status Committee shall have due regard to the following factors in deciding on applications that request a transfer, readmission or repeat of a year/semester:
- a) Leaving Certificate points requirement in the year of entry/re-entry for the programme of study sought
 - b) Quotas applying in the year of entry/re-entry to that programme
 - c) The Central Applications Office (CAO) policy and Admissions Office procedures for the filling of vacant places in Year 1
 - d) The timing of the request for transfer and its implications for the student's ability to complete the programme in the normal way
 - e) The views of the Head of Department (or nominee) of the department to which or from which the student is requesting a transfer
- 4.4.4.8 In granting a transfer or readmission, the Student Status Committee may attach special conditions and/or require additional prescribed work to be completed satisfactorily.
- 4.4.4.9 Status decisions affecting individual students are notified to the student by the Student Academic Administration Office.
- 4.4.5 *Application for Readmission/Return from Leave of Absence***
- 4.4.5.1 Students seeking readmission or return from leave of absence to the College after at least one semester's absence are required to make their application to the Student Academic Administration Office at least three weeks prior to the commencement of the relevant semester.
- 4.4.6 *Application for Leave of Absence***
- 4.4.6.1 Normally, students should lodge leave of absence applications with the Student Academic Administration Office before the end of the semester preceding that in which they intend to take leave.
- 4.4.6.2 Normally, the student will be expected to fulfil the following conditions before being granted leave of absence:
- a) Completion of one semester (or the year for a year-based programme) at the College on the programme for which they are currently enrolled
 - b) Be in good academic standing
 - c) Where the Committee is satisfied that the student's academic standing was directly affected by the factors cited in support of the student's application for leave, the 'good standing' condition may be waived
- 4.4.6.3 The following circumstances shall be considered to be acceptable reasons for granting leave of absence:
- a) Certified illness
 - b) Financial hardship
 - c) Family bereavement
 - d) Psychological, emotional or social problems that can be verified by confidential report from one or more of the following people:
 - Medical officer
 - Family doctor
 - Counsellor
 - Chaplain

- 4.4.6.4 Verification of vocational uncertainty may be required from the Assistant Dean or nominee and the counsellor. The student will be expected to submit evidence of a plan to deal constructively with the vocational uncertainty during the leave of absence.
- 4.4.6.5 The information required by the administration of the College shall not be such as to breach any code of ethics or professional practice of those persons supplying the information.
- 4.4.6.6 The leave of absence form shall be completed by the student and authorised by the chairperson of the Student Status Committee.
- 4.4.7 *Application for Internal Transfer/External Transfer***
- 4.4.7.1 Normally, students should lodge internal transfer applications with the Student Academic Administration Office before the end of the semester preceding that in which they intend to enter a new programme or pathway of study.
- 4.4.7.2 In the case of external transfer applications from applicants who wish to transfer to Mary Immaculate College, applicants are required to provide academic documentation to support their application.
- 4.4.8 *Application for Exemption***
- 4.4.8.1 The question of exemption from a full semester or year(s) of a programme of study is handled as part of the student's admission. Application for exemption from an individual module not covered in the admission process shall be made to the Student Academic Administration Office before the commencement of the semester in which the module is due to be taken. To be eligible for exemption, students are expected to have achieved a minimum pass standard in an equivalent module.
- 4.4.8.2 Mature students may apply for exemption from off-campus placement modules.
- 4.4.8.3 Upon consultation with the relevant programme coordinators, the Student Status Committee may decide to award an exemption or carry forward the previous grade, as appropriate.
- 4.4.8.4 Students required to repeat a year or a full semester under the progression policy are not eligible for exemption in individual modules in that year or semester.
- 4.4.9 *Application for Alternative to External Academic Placement***
- 4.4.9.1 In exceptional circumstances, students on programmes where an external academic placement is a core element may apply to achieve by alternative means the relevant number of credits applicable to the external academic placement.
- 4.4.9.2 Normally, students should lodge applications with the Student Academic Administration Office by July for placements commencing the following January or by February for placements commencing the following September.
- 4.4.10 *Application to Link-in/Repeat a Semester/Repeat a Year***
- 4.4.10.1 Application to link-in, repeat a semester or repeat a year shall be made to Student Academic Administration by a date specified by the Student Academic Administration Office.
- 4.4.10.2 Following a meeting of the Faculty Examination Boards, all repeat options in terms of academic progression are identified to actionable students in their Action Letters. All recommendations made to students are in line with the College's academic regulations and procedures.

4.5 Supporting Procedures Appendix 1: Assessment Regulations

1. Attendance at Examination Venues

- 1.1 Students shall not be permitted to enter the examination venue after the first 20 minutes of the scheduled assessment time has elapsed.
- 1.2 It is a breach of assessment regulations for students to leave the examination venue before the first 30 minutes of the assessment time has elapsed.
- 1.3 It is a breach of assessment regulations for students to leave the examination venue during the last 10 minutes of the assessment time. Students present during the last 10 minutes of the assessment time must remain in their seats until all examination booklets have been collected.

2. Authorised and Unauthorised Material

- 2.1 Students may bring only authorised material into the examination venue. Authorised material comprises writing instruments, non-programmable calculators, Mary Immaculate College student ID card, drawing instruments and material as advised by the module coordinator, such as mathematical tables and handouts. Additional materials, such as dictionaries, textbooks, lecture notes, programmable devices and computers/laptops, are permitted only with the express permission of the relevant academic staff member. It is a breach of the assessment regulations for a student to have in their possession authorised material that includes or has attached to it unauthorised material, such as written notes or inserts.
- 2.2 Students shall not bring unauthorised material into the examination venue. Unauthorised material includes calculator covers, pencil cases, mobile phones, smart watches, electronic devices not explicitly approved by the relevant academic staff member, outdoor clothing and bags.
- 2.3 If a student is in doubt as to whether material is authorised or unauthorised, they should ask an invigilator before the examination begins.
- 2.4 Writing of any kind on clothing or any part of the body may be considered to be unauthorised material.
- 2.5 All authorised material, such as paper, examination booklets, graph paper, electronic file storage devices, etc., will be provided by invigilators. In the examination venue, students can write only on authorised paper and/or create and store data using only authorised electronic devices, and only such authorised material will be submitted to the examiner(s) for correction. Students shall not remove any of these items from the examination venue.

3. During the Assessment

- 3.1 Students shall comply with all directions from the invigilators.
- 3.2 Students shall display their student identity card on their desk or assigned work areas.
- 3.3 A clean desk policy is in operation for all examinations: only authorised stationery and material and the student's ID card will be allowed on the desk.
- 3.4 Students shall not engage in unauthorised collaboration or attempted collaboration, copying or attempted copying.
- 3.5 Students shall not have in their possession, use or attempt to use a mobile phone, smart watch or other unauthorised material.
- 3.6 Each student is responsible for ensuring that their examination booklet and associated materials are in the possession of an invigilator before leaving the examination venue. Students shall write their ID number clearly on all materials submitted to the invigilator.

4. Breach of Assessment Regulations

- 4.1 It is a major offence under the Code of Student Conduct to breach the assessment regulations. Alleged breaches will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct.
- 4.2 A student who is considered to have breached or attempted to breach the assessment regulations shall be informed at the earliest opportunity by an invigilator, in the presence of a witness (viz., another invigilator, an academic staff member or a student). Where a breach of assessment regulations relates to possession of unauthorised material, such material will be retained by the invigilator and forwarded to the Student Academic Administration Office along with the completed Breach of Assessment Regulations forms. The student is then allowed to finish the examination. Subsequent procedures are outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
- 4.3 Normally the penalty for breach of the assessment regulations is suspension for 12 months. A repeat of such conduct shall warrant expulsion.

5. Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 In addition to this chapter of the handbook, research postgraduate students and their supervisors are referred to the general academic regulations, marks and standards, programme-specific regulations, supporting procedures and code of student conduct in chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, respectively, of this handbook. Furthermore, the [Research and Graduate School Intranet](#) codes of practice that support the research postgraduate process.
- 5.1.2 For the purpose of these regulations, the Vice-President Academic Affairs nominee is the Vice-President Research. The Vice-President Academic Affairs may also delegate some or all of their functions to the Graduate School Director.
- 5.1.3 The academic regulations detailed hereunder shall apply to all postgraduate studies undertaken by a research and thesis mode at Mary Immaculate College. The regulations apply in each faculty and department of the College. In cases of any differences between these regulations and other documents, these regulations will supersede any other document. The regulations concerning taught master's programmes are covered in chapter 2, Marks and Standards.
- 5.1.4 *An Chomhairle Acadúil* 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 on the College's Policy Portal.
- 5.1.5 An individual faculty of the College 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 College regulations detailed below, such additional requirements may be implemented by the faculty concerned provided such requirements are approved by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.
- 5.1.6 Any such additional requirements approved by *An Chomhairle Acadúil* shall be implemented, in conjunction with the College's academic regulations, by the faculty that has presented them to *An Chomhairle Acadúil*. The requirements may be rescinded only on foot of a decision by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.
- 5.1.7 References are made throughout these regulations to the completion of Postgraduate Research (PGR) forms. The PGR forms underpin the postgraduate process from admission to graduation. The forms are available on the Postgraduate Researchers Information section of the [Research and Graduate School Intranet](#).
- 5.1.8 Research postgraduate students will be expected to develop and maintain a personal development plan that sets goals and timelines for the 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).

5.2 Higher Degrees

- 5.2.1 Mary Immaculate College provides opportunities for the study and submission of research postgraduate degrees in the following ways:
- Master's and doctoral degrees by research and thesis
 - Professional doctorates – see chapter 2, Marks and Standards, regulation [2.9](#) and [Appendix 5](#)
 - Structured PhD programmes – see [Appendix 4](#)
 - Monograph or article-based theses – see [Appendix 2](#)
 - Joint research degrees – see [Appendix 6](#)

- 5.2.2 To qualify for a higher degree by research, students must be registered with Mary Immaculate College for the minimum lengths of time specified by the regulations in section 5.8 below. Students pay continuation fees to remain on the research postgraduate register.
- 5.2.3 Mary Immaculate College currently offers a Master of Arts at research master’s level and the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at doctoral level.
- 5.2.4 All higher degrees by research in Mary Immaculate College are deemed to be honours awards without classification.
- 5.2.5 Students for higher degrees must meet the requirements and hold the academic qualifications outlined below. These qualifications must have been obtained from Mary Immaculate College or from another institution or awarding body that is acceptable to Mary Immaculate College for this purpose.

5.3 Applications

- 5.3.1 Students should, in the first instance, identify a suitable project and supervisor(s). Students are encouraged to use personal contacts, the literature and the websites of the College to help them achieve this. Once a suitable project and supervisor(s) have been identified and funding issues have been resolved, applicants should complete the Research Postgraduate Studies application form, available from the [Research and Graduate School Intranet](#), in consultation with the proposed internal supervisor(s).
- 5.3.2 Once the form has been signed by the relevant Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Research and Graduate School by the applicant.
- 5.3.3 Students for registration for higher degrees may be required to participate in an interview to determine their ability to carry out the proposed postgraduate research and the suitability of the proposed topic.
- 5.3.4 Students may be required to demonstrate their competence in the English language by interview (see 5.3.3 above and [Appendix 1](#)). In addition, students must either provide certified confirmation that they have completed a primary or a master’s degree through the medium of English or submit the official results of English proficiency tests as per the requirements specified in the table below. The College may consider English proficiency tests other than those listed in the table as meeting the English language requirements for pursuing a higher degree at Mary Immaculate College.

Table 5.1: English Language Entry Requirements

Proficiency Test	Requirement
IELTS (International English Language Testing System)	Overall score of 6.5 or above, with no less than 6.0 in any one component
TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)	Minimum score of 580 (paper-based) or 90 (internet-based)
ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Examination, University of Cambridge	Grade C or higher on a Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)/Grade A on a Certificate of Advanced English (CAE)

- 5.3.5 Students who seek to undertake a joint research degree should apply to the coordinating institution for admission to that research award. Students who successfully register at the coordinating institutions will be deemed to be students of Mary Immaculate College and added to the postgraduate research register.

5.3.6 The Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee will consider recommendations from the Heads of Department on all applications for entry to the masters and PhD registers.

5.3.7 Where an applicant does not enrol and register within 12 months from the date of the initial offer letter, the applicant should submit an updated application for reconsideration.

5.4 Admission: Entry Requirements for Research Degrees (Including Professional Doctorates)

5.4.1 The primary degrees referred to in this section are Level 8 or equivalent honours degrees as defined by the National Framework of Qualifications. The usual minimum requirements for entry to a research master's, professional doctorate or PhD degree are:

- a) An appropriate master's or equivalent qualification that has been obtained from a university or other institution recognised by Mary Immaculate College following a period of study similar to that required in Mary Immaculate College. (A student who holds a master's degree in a discipline other than that in which the doctoral research is intended to be pursued shall be considered for entry under 5.4.1b.)
or
- b) An honours primary bachelor's degree with a minimum classification of 2.1 honours or equivalent qualification
or
- c) An honours primary bachelor's degree with a classification of 2.2 honours or equivalent qualification. (Students who enrol with a 2.2 honours degree or equivalent will be required to undergo a progression review after the first six months of their programme of study.)
or
- d) A degree, or equivalent qualification, other than that specified in 5.4.1a, 5.4.1b or 5.4.1c and a minimum of four years' acceptable professional experience at an appropriate and relevant level may be considered for entry to the masters register. Students within this category without a minimum of four years' acceptable professional experience will be considered for entry under regulation 5.4.3.

5.4.2 Additional programme-specific requirements may apply to students for professional doctorate or Structured PhD programmes. These will be specified in the relevant documentation for each programme. Entry to professional doctorate programmes requires qualifications that satisfy 5.4.1a or 5.4.1b above.

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

- a) 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 Mary Immaculate College 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 Mary Immaculate College to be appropriate contributions to the particular field of study
- b) 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
- c) Applicants who fall into any one of the categories listed under 5.4.4 shall be considered in the first instance by the Head of Department and then a recommendation would be made by the Dean of Faculty to the Research and Graduate School. The Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee will adjudicate on each of these cases individually.

5.4.4 The MQ5000 Module

- 5.4.4.1 The requirements listed in 5.4.4.2 to 5.4.4.5 shall apply to applicants approved for entry under regulation 5.4.3.
- 5.4.4.2 An applicant shall be required to register for and complete successfully the master's qualifying module MQ5000 prior to formal progression to the masters 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.
- 5.4.4.3 Applicants may be required to complete not more than six relevant modules (which may be taught or project-based) selected by the proposed supervisor and approved by the Dean of the faculty in which the research is to be undertaken. Where appropriate, the level of formal and relevant academic qualification(s) attained will determine the taught and project-based module requirements, including the minimum number of ECTS credits to be completed on a normal graded basis. Any such modules shall, if possible, be taken over two semesters and shall be evenly distributed over the two semesters. The minimum cumulative quality credit average (QCA) to be attained in the prescribed taught and project-based modules shall be 3.00.
- 5.4.4.4 In the case of a candidate who does not possess a degree and who is proposed for master's studies in accordance with the procedures set out above, the approval of an external examiner in the relevant field of study shall be required. The external examiner shall take into account in his/her assessment of the applicant's proposal the applicant's performance in the taught and project-based modules and in the master's qualifying module MQ5000. Additionally, if the external examiner so wishes, a *viva voce* examination of the applicant may be arranged and taken into account in the external examiner's evaluation and recommendation.
- 5.4.4.5 In appropriate cases, use should be made of current Mary Immaculate College undergraduate project modules as a means of assessing an applicant's ability or potential to undertake research leading to a higher degree.
- 5.4.4.6 On successful completion of the provisions specified in 5.4.4.2 to 5.4.4.5, the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee shall approve the enrolment of the applicant for a master's degree at Mary Immaculate College.
- 5.4.4.7 Should any ambiguity arise with regard to these regulations, the regulations shall be subject to interpretation by the Vice-President Academic Administration in consultation with the relevant Dean and Graduate School Director.

5.5 Supervisory Panel and Supervision

- 5.5.1 Each student for a postgraduate research degree shall be assigned a primary supervisor and, where appropriate, joint supervisor(s) who have been approved by the Head of Department and the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee. Where the research is interdisciplinary, the supervisory arrangements must reflect this. Where a joint research degree is proposed, the supervisors will be appointed in accordance with the requirements of the coordinating institution and terms of the Memorandum of Understanding. When supervisors are being nominated, due cognisance should be taken of any potential conflicts of interest, including those of a personal, research or professional nature.
- 5.5.2 The primary supervisor shall be an academic staff member of the Mary Immaculate College faculty in which the research student is registered. The joint supervisor(s) may be a Mary Immaculate College academic staff member or may be employed by another institution.
- 5.5.3 For doctoral degrees, the primary supervisor shall be one or more of the following: (i) a professor; (ii) the holder of a doctoral degree; (iii) an academic staff member who has already supervised a doctoral degree to completion. The Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee will

require an additional joint supervisor in the case of supervisors whose employment contracts end prior to the anticipated completion of the research programme.

- 5.5.4 For master's degrees, the primary supervisor shall be one or more of the following: (i) a professor; (ii) the holder of a master's degree or higher; (iii) an academic staff member who has already supervised a master's degree to completion.
- 5.5.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of 5.5.3 and 5.5.4, the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, permit the appointment of a primary supervisor not meeting the requirements specified in 5.5.3 and 5.5.4.
- 5.5.6 Joint supervisors shall hold at least the qualification equivalent to that for which the supervised student is studying.
- 5.5.7 Notwithstanding the provision of 5.5.6, the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee may approve the appointment of a joint supervisor not meeting the requirement of 5.5.6.
- 5.5.8 Where a supervisor retires or resigns from the staff of the College or is unable to continue to supervise the research for any other reason, such as because of an issue that may have arisen in relation to the professional interaction between the student and the supervisor(s) that is not in accordance with sections 2 and 3 of the UL [Postgraduate Student Charter](#) and that may have been dealt with in accordance with the College's [Complaints by a Student Policy](#), the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty, using the appropriate Alteration of Supervisor(s) PGR form, shall propose to the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee the revised arrangements for the supervision of the student for ratification.
- 5.5.9 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.
- 5.5.10 Where applicable, the programme coordinator will inform the student 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 programme coordinator will be responsible for the assessment of the generic and transferable skills portfolio prior to the annual review. The student will be responsible for registering for the taught modules with the Student Academic Administration Office.
- 5.5.11 Complaints about the adequacy of supervision will not be considered once the thesis has been presented for examination.
- 5.5.12 Students have the right to appeal to the Vice-President Academic Affairs if they consider that the regulations have been unfairly applied.

5.6 Research Student Progression

- 5.6.1 Research Review Panels will be formed in each department to review on an annual basis the progress of all research students within the department. Where the Research Review Panel is not satisfied that the student is making satisfactory progress, the panel can refer the student to the Research Confirmation Panel, where the student will be required to present and defend their work. Students have the right to appeal the decision of the Research Confirmation Panel to the Research Progression Appeal Panel. Students who undertake a joint research degree shall follow the research progression requirements of the coordinating institution. Students who successfully complete progression at the coordinating institution will be deemed to have satisfactorily progressed at Mary Immaculate College.

- 5.6.2 In the case of research students registered on a part-time basis, the Research Review Panel will take cognisance of the student's part-time registration in determining whether or not satisfactory progress has been made.
- 5.6.3 The annual review process does not need to be undertaken by research students who have submitted a copy of their thesis for examination by the internal and external examiner. All other research students must undergo a review.
- 5.6.4 Students entering postgraduate studies on the basis of regulations 5.4.1c or 5.4.1d shall undergo two reviews during their first year of study. In the event that the completion of their first semester of study does not coincide with the end of the academic year, the department will convene a special meeting of the Research Review Panel.
- 5.6.5 Students on the research masters register who wish to transfer to the PhD register must undertake the masters transfer process prior to month 18. The Research Confirmation Panel will be convened to enable students to meet this requirement.
- 5.6.6 Students on the PhD register may, with the written agreement of their supervisor(s), request that their registration be changed to the masters register.
- 5.6.7 Review Panel**
- 5.6.7.1 Each department shall convene a meeting of its Research Review Panel(s) to review on an annual basis the performance of all research students. Furthermore, a research student or their supervisor can request a Research Review Panel to be convened at any time to review the performance of that student. These panels will review each student's submission and a progress report of the student's work in a format to be agreed by each department. The format agreed by the department may require the 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.
- 5.6.7.2 The Research Review Panel will comprise the supervisor(s), the Head of Department or nominee, who will act as chairperson, and at least one independent panel member, nominated by the Head of Department, who satisfies the criteria of appointment of supervisor (as per section 5.5). Where the student undertakes a structured PhD programme, the programme coordinator may act as the independent panel member. The supervisor cannot act as chairperson of the Research Review Panel. The chairperson of the Research Review Panel will act as the adviser to all research students presenting for review. The chairperson, independent panel member or programme coordinator are not precluded from membership of the Research Confirmation Panel or from acting as an internal examiner at the examination stage.
- 5.6.7.3 Where the Head of Department is a supervisor of the research student, the Dean of Faculty or nominee will assume the role of Head of Department by acting as chairperson and nominating the independent member to the panel.
- 5.6.7.4 The Research Review Panel's assessment of research students will take cognisance of the approved research programme, the duration on the research register and, where applicable, the programme structure, including taught components, approved by the College. Students on the masters register will state whether or not they wish to be considered for transfer to the PhD register.
- 5.6.7.5 The Research Review Panel will assess the student's performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation. The Panel's recommendation shall be one of the following:
- a) The student's progress is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant continuation on the masters or PhD register, as applicable. (G)
 - b) The student's progress is not satisfactory and the student is required to undertake the Research Confirmation Process. (NG)

- 5.6.7.6 The Research Postgraduate Progression Report PGR-9 form should be used by the Research Review Panel within each department to record the student's performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation. A copy of the completed progression form should be held on file in the department office.
- 5.6.7.7 When the Research Review Panel has been completed, the grades for all the research postgraduate students in each department must be entered by the Research and Graduate School via the online Student Records System prior to the June Faculty Examination Board meeting. Please note that only one of two status grades can be entered on the online system:
- G: Research to continue
 - NG: Research not progressing satisfactorily
- 5.6.7.8 Successful completion of the research review process is not a guarantee that the student will be awarded the appropriate research award.
- 5.6.7.9 Where relevant, each semester, a student's performance on the taught modules within their research programme will be processed in advance of the meeting of the Faculty Examination Board. Where a student has a deficient grade (F, I, NG, N) in a taught module that is not a progression requirement for their programme, the student may be allowed to progress provided there is agreement that the deficient grade will be cleared either at the next available opportunity or at the annual repeats. Additionally, any deficient grade must be cleared prior to the submission of the thesis for examination.
- 5.6.8 Research Confirmation Panel**
- 5.6.8.1 Each department shall convene a meeting of its Research Confirmation Panel(s) to review research student performance following referral from the Research Review Panel. The Research Confirmation Panel will also convene to consider applications from research students who wish to transfer from the masters to the PhD register. The confirmation panel will consider: (a) the report from the Research Review Panel; (b) a transcript of the student's results in the taught element of the programme, where applicable; (c) a written presentation of the research; and (d) a *viva voce* examination following presentation by the student of their research. The final date for submission by the panel of the outcome of the review will be in accordance with the grading deadline of the following Faculty Examination Board meeting.
- 5.6.8.2 The Research Confirmation Panel will comprise the Head of Department or nominee, who will act as chairperson, and two independent panel members, one nominated by the Head of Department and the other nominated by the Graduate School Director. To be appointed, the independent panel members must satisfy the criteria of appointment of supervisor (as per section 5.5). Where the student undertakes a structured PhD programme, the programme coordinator may act as the independent panel member. The chairperson of the Research Review Panel will act as the adviser to all research students presenting for review. The chairperson, independent panel member or programme coordinator are not precluded from acting as an internal examiner at the examination stage.
- 5.6.8.3 Where the Head of Department is a supervisor of the research student, the Dean of Faculty or nominee will assume the role of Head of Department by acting as chairperson and nominating the independent member to the panel.
- 5.6.8.4 The Research Confirmation Panel will assess the student'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. (G)
 - b) The student's research progress on the masters register is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant transfer to the PhD register. (G)

- c) The student's research progress on the PhD register is unsatisfactory and the student is transferred to the masters register. (T)
- d) The student's research progress is unsatisfactory and the student's enrolment on the masters or PhD register, as applicable, should be discontinued. (W)

5.6.8.5 In relation to recommendation d. above, the Research Confirmation Panel will determine, in consultation with the programme coordinator, whether or not the student meets the requirements for entry to an appropriate taught postgraduate programme.

5.6.8.6 In addition, the Research Confirmation Panel may recommend to the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee a change in the supervisory arrangements for the student.

5.6.8.7 The outcome of the Research Confirmation Panel must be submitted on a completed and signed PGR-3a or PGR-3b form to the Research and Graduate School. The status grades are defined as follows:

- G: Research to continue
- NG: Research not progressing satisfactorily
- T: Transfer to masters register
- W: Withdraw/Discontinue studies

5.6.8.8 Should the student not be satisfied with the outcome of the Research Confirmation Panel review, they may appeal the matter to the Head of Department. The appeal must be made within two weeks of the publication of the research review grade.

5.6.9 Research Progression Appeal Panel

5.6.9.1 The Research Progression Appeal Panel will comprise the Graduate School Director or nominee, who will act as chairperson, and two independent panel members, one nominated by the Head of Department and the other by the Graduate School Director. In exceptional circumstances, the Head of Department may appoint an external academic from a recognised third-level institution as one of the two independent panel members. All members of the panel should satisfy the criteria for appointment as a supervisor (as per section 5.5). The chairperson and independent panel members are precluded from acting as examiners at the examination stage.

5.6.9.2 The Research Progression Appeal Panel will assess the student'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. (G)
- b) The student's research progress on the masters register is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant transfer to the PhD register. (G)
- c) The student's research progress on the PhD register is unsatisfactory and the student is transferred to the masters register. (T)
- d) The student's research progress is unsatisfactory and the student's enrolment on the masters or PhD register is discontinued. (W)

5.6.9.3 In relation to recommendation d) above, the Research Progression Appeal Panel will determine, in consultation with the programme coordinator, whether or not the student meets the requirements for entry to an appropriate taught postgraduate programme.

5.6.9.4 In addition, the Research Progression Appeal Panel may recommend to the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee a change in the supervisory arrangements for the student.

5.6.9.5 The outcome of the Research Progression Appeal Panel must be submitted on a completed and signed PGR-3c form to the Research and Graduate School. The status grades are defined as follows:

- G: Research to continue
- NG: Research not progressing satisfactorily
- T: Transfer to masters register
- W: Withdraw/Discontinue studies

5.7 Location of Research

- 5.7.1 To qualify for a higher degree by research, students must be registered with Mary Immaculate College. The research may be carried out at Mary Immaculate College or at another location with the approval of the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee or the Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee.
- 5.7.2 The Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee must be satisfied that the candidate can attend Mary Immaculate College for such periods as are necessary for the adequate supervision of the research or that satisfactory arrangements are in place.

5.8 Periods of Registration

- 5.8.1 The minimum period of registration for a master's degree by research is one year and for a doctoral degree by research is three years. Where a student has been registered for research postgraduate studies at universities or institutions other than Mary Immaculate College, the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee shall determine the year of study the student enters the master's or doctoral programme subject to a minimum period of registration of one year at Mary Immaculate College.
- 5.8.2 The minimum period of registration for a professional doctorate programme is three years.
- 5.8.3 Registration for part-time research may be permitted by Mary Immaculate College provided that candidates can attend the College 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 registration. Research students on the full-time register who obtain other full-time employment after two years on the master's degree register or three years on the PhD register may apply in writing to the Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee 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 effected, the new time limits apply from the original date of full-time registration.
- 5.8.4 If a student decides to seek readmission after voluntarily discontinuing their studies or having been withdrawn as a result of not returning from an approved leave of absence, the student must re-apply as a new applicant. During the re-application process and prior to enrolment, the Fees Office, in conjunction with the relevant academic department and the Graduate School Director, must adjudicate on any matters pertaining to tuition fees (including outstanding fees from a previous enrolment).

5.9 Leave of Absence

- 5.9.1 In special circumstances (e.g. financial, medical or personal reasons), a student may be granted up to a period of one year's leave of absence off the register. Application should be made to the Research and Graduate School for consideration by the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee. 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 Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee, this period may be extended up to one year. Extensions to a leave of absence beyond two years may be considered where there are serious extenuating circumstances (medical or personal reasons that preclude the student from resuming their studies). Where a student does not apply for an extension to their leave of absence, they will be deemed to have withdrawn from their studies.

- 5.9.2 Prior to readmission to the doctoral or masters register, as applicable, the candidate must review in detail their work to date with their supervisor(s). Once the Leave of Absence Readmission form has been completed and signed by the student, supervisor and Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Research and Graduate School for consideration by the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee.
- 5.9.3 In instances where the student'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 student may be required to present to a Research Confirmation Panel as per section 5.6.8. Once the revised research proposal has been agreed and the Research Postgraduate Readmission Form has been completed and signed by the student, supervisor(s) and Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Research and Graduate School for consideration by the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee.
- 5.9.4 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 Dean of Faculty on the relevant PGR form (Alteration to Research Degree Supervisor(s) form). The recommendation will be approved by the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee.
- 5.9.5 On resumption of their 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.

5.10 Generic and Transferable Skills Training

- 5.10.1 All research students are required to attend the annual induction programme for postgraduate researchers provided by the Research and Graduate School. In addition, some faculties or departments may require students registered in their departments to attend short subject-specific induction courses.
- 5.10.2 All research students should develop a personal development plan in consultation with their supervisor(s).
- 5.10.3 The training requirements of students on structured PhD and professional doctorate programmes will be determined in accordance with the requirements of the individual programmes.

5.11 Research Ethics and Research Integrity

- 5.11.1 All research will be conducted in accordance with the policies, procedures and guidelines of the [Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee \(MIREC\)](#).
- 5.11.2 All research will be conducted in accordance with the [Research Integrity Policy](#).

5.12 Thesis Specifications

- 5.12.1 The thesis must be presented and produced in accordance with the *College's Requirements for the Preparation and Submission of Master's and Doctoral Theses* (see [Appendix 2](#)). Students who enrol on joint research degrees will comply with the requirements of the coordinating institution and terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and/or Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).
- 5.12.2 The maximum permitted length for a master's degree thesis is 60,000 words and for a PhD thesis is 100,000 words.
- 5.12.3 The thesis shall be written in English, Irish or another language subject to the provisions set out in [Appendix 1](#), *Presentation of Master's and Doctoral Theses in a Language Other Than English*.
- 5.12.4 The practice of engaging professional editorial services is not permitted.

5.12.5 Mary Immaculate College recognises the importance of peer-reviewed publications and welcomes monograph-based or article-based theses for its research degrees. See [Appendix 2](#).

5.13 Copyright and Intellectual Property

5.13.1 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 maskworks, trade secrets, know-how, research data, tangible research property and similar property/rights) conceived, invented or reduced to practise by the candidate during, or as a result of, research undertaken at the College shall be the property of the College.

5.13.2 College policy with respect to ownership and exploitation of intellectual property is set out in the current Mary Immaculate College Intellectual Property policy (to which the attention of the candidate is drawn generally and copies of which are available from the College website). Benefits accruing to the College from the subsequent commercialisation of the intellectual property referred shall be allocated in accordance with such policy.

5.14 Examination Procedures

5.14.1 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 doctoral 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.

5.14.2 By using the relevant PGR form, the candidate must obtain the agreement of their 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 their examination.

5.14.3 In the event that their 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 Dean of Faculty if the Head of Department is the supervisor). Following consultation with the relevant Dean of Faculty, 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.

5.14.4 The candidate shall submit the prescribed number of copies of the thesis to the Research and Graduate School for examination.

5.14.5 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.

5.14.6 The candidate's thesis shall be examined by an examination panel. Using the relevant PGR form, the supervisor, in conjunction with the relevant Head(s) of Department or Dean, shall nominate members of the Examination Panel to the Postgraduate Research Sub-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.

5.14.7 The Examination Panel for a master's thesis will comprise an internal examiner and an external examiner. The external examiner shall not be a member of or affiliated to the University of

Limerick or Mary Immaculate College. Where the candidate is a Mary Immaculate College 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 Graduate School Director will request the Head of Department or Faculty Dean to nominate a chairperson to the Examination Panel subject to approval by the Postgraduate Research Sub-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 5.5.

- 5.14.8 The Examination Panel for a doctoral thesis will comprise an internal examiner, an external examiner and the Head of Department or Faculty Dean, or nominee, who will act as chairperson. Where the candidate is a Mary Immaculate College staff member, the internal examiner is replaced with a second external examiner. The normal expectation is that the *viva voce* examination for research degrees will take place at the College with all the relevant parties in attendance. In exceptional circumstances, remote *viva voce* examinations may be conducted. Guidelines for conducting *viva voce* examinations remotely are available on the [Research and Graduate School Intranet](#).
- 5.14.9 The external examiner shall normally be an academic staff member of a recognised third-level institution and 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 doctoral degree in the research area of the thesis being examined. Evidence of these requirements should be included in the external examiner's curriculum vitae, which accompanies the form for the nomination of examiners for research degrees. The external examiner shall not be a member of or affiliated to the University of Limerick or Mary Immaculate College.
- 5.14.10 For doctoral degrees, the internal examiner shall be an academic staff member of the University of Limerick or Mary Immaculate College and shall either be a professor or have a doctoral degree.
- 5.14.11 For master's degrees, the internal examiner shall be an academic staff member of the University of Limerick or Mary Immaculate College and shall be either a professor or the holder of a master's degree or higher.
- 5.14.12 Notwithstanding the provisions of 5.14.9, 5.14.10 and 5.14.11, the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, approve the appointment of an internal and/or external examiner not meeting the requirements specified above.
- 5.14.13 Following Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee approval, members of the Examination Panel shall be deemed appointed by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.
- 5.14.14 An external examiner cannot examine more than two theses in any five-year period for Mary Immaculate College. This does not affect their role as external examiner on taught programmes or on the taught element of professional/structured doctorate programmes. In exceptional circumstances, an appeal to allow the same external examiner to examine within the exclusion period can be made to the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee.
- 5.14.15 A *viva voce* examination is a required element of the doctoral examination process and may be a required element of the master's examination process. Subject to the approval of the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee and in exceptional circumstances only, an alternative assessment instrument to the *viva voce* may be utilised. Two working days before the *viva voce* examination, the external and internal examiners should share independent pre-*viva* reports with each other and the chairperson. These reports will form the basis of the final examination report, which should be appended to the relevant PGR form (examiners report). 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, they should be available for consultation, if required, with the Examination Panel. A code of practice for the *viva voce* examination is available on the [Research and Graduate School Intranet](#).

- 5.14.16 When the examination of the thesis and, where applicable, the *viva voce* has been concluded, the examiners shall submit to the Research and Graduate School the relevant (typed) PGR examiners' report form. Where both examiners are in agreement on the content of the report, a single (typed) report signed by both examiners will fulfil this requirement. If a disagreement arises between the examiners, the chairperson is required to clarify and, where possible, reconcile differing viewpoints. If this is not possible, the examiners should submit separate (typed) reports to the Research and Graduate School, and the matter will be referred to the Graduate School Director. In exceptional circumstances, an additional external examiner may be asked to adjudicate.
- 5.14.17 The report(s) should be returned by the chairperson to the Research and Graduate School within five working days from the date of the *viva voce* examination. Where the aforementioned timeline expires, the chairperson will notify the Graduate School Director, who will advise the examiner(s) in writing that the report(s) must be returned within a further 15 working days from the date of the *viva voce* examination. Where an external examiner's report is not returned to the Research and Graduate School in accordance with the aforementioned timelines and subsequent to consultation with the Graduate School Director, the internal examiner, with support from the chairperson of the *viva voce* examination, shall submit the relevant report within a further five working days.
- 5.14.18 In exceptional circumstances, a change to the timeline outlined above can be authorised by the Graduate School Director.
- 5.14.19 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
- 5.14.20 Where the examiners' report is completed in a language other than Irish or English, the examiners must include in the report a summary paragraph written in English that specifies the overall conclusion and award recommendation.
- 5.14.21 In the case of a master's degree, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations on the examiners' report form:
- a) The degree of Master of _____ be awarded
 - b) The degree of Master of _____ be awarded subject to the correction of minor errors within a period of three months for reconsideration by the internal examiner
 - c) The degree of Master of _____ be awarded subject to the completion of prescribed amendments within a period of six months for reconsideration by the internal and/or external examiner
 - d) No degree be awarded and the candidate continue on the masters register
 - e) No degree be awarded
- 5.14.22 In the case of a doctoral degree, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations on the examiners' report form:
- a) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (or Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology) be awarded

- b) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (or Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology) be awarded subject to the correction of minor errors within a period of three months for reconsideration by the internal examiner
- c) The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (or Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology) be awarded subject to the completion of prescribed amendments within a period of six months for reconsideration by the internal and/or external examiner
- d) No degree be awarded and the candidate continue on the PhD (or Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology) register
- e) The degree of Master of _____ be awarded subject to the completion of prescribed amendments within a period of six months for reconsideration by the internal examiner
- f) No degree be awarded

- 5.14.23 In relation to the examiners' recommendations 5.14.21c and 5.14.22c above, the external examiner(s) must indicate on the relevant PGR examiners' report form whether or not they wish to review the thesis following the completion of the prescribed amendments. The candidate must undertake these amendments in conjunction with their supervisor(s) in the timelines recommended by the examiners.
- 5.14.24 In relation to the examiners' recommendation 5.14.21b, 5.14.21c, 5.14.22b and 5.14.22c 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 their supervisor(s) in the timelines recommended by the examiners. In addition, a typed document detailing the corrections and/or amendments undertaken, including responses to any comments emanating from the examiners' report(s), must be submitted by the candidate for review in conjunction with the revised copy of the thesis submitted to the examiner(s) for reconsideration.
- 5.14.25 In relation to the examiners' recommendation 5.14.22e above, the candidate must be informed, by means of an annotated copy of the thesis, a typed list or both, of the amendments that need to be made to attain the master's degree and of the reasons why a doctoral degree shall not be awarded. The candidate must undertake these amendments in conjunction with their supervisor(s) in the timelines recommended by the examiners. In addition, a typed document detailing the corrections and/or amendments undertaken, including responses to any comments emanating from the examiners' report(s), must be submitted by the candidate for review in conjunction with the revised copy of the thesis submitted to the examiner(s) for reconsideration.
- 5.14.26 In relation to the examiners' recommendations 5.14.21b and 5.14.22b above, the internal examiner or, in the case of the candidate being a Mary Immaculate College staff member, the external examiner must confirm in writing to the Research and Graduate School that the required corrections have been made to a satisfactory standard.
- 5.14.27 In relation to the examiners' recommendations 5.14.21c and 5.14.22c above, the internal examiner and, if applicable in accordance with regulation 5.14.23, the external examiner must confirm in writing to the Research and Graduate School that the required amendments have been made to a satisfactory standard.
- 5.14.28 In relation to the examiners' recommendations 5.14.21c and 5.14.22c above in the case of the candidate being a Mary Immaculate College staff member, one of the external examiners must confirm in writing to the Research and Graduate School that the required amendments have been made to a satisfactory standard.

- 5.14.29 In relation to the examiners' recommendation 5.14.22e above, the internal examiner must confirm in writing to the Research and Graduate School that the required amendments have been made to a satisfactory standard.
- 5.14.30 In relation to the examiners' recommendations 5.14.21b, 5.14.21c, 5.14.22b and 5.14.22c above, if a candidate does not resubmit the revised version of their thesis to the Research and 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.
- 5.14.31 In relation to the examiners' recommendations 5.14.21d and 5.14.22d 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 5.14. In this case, in so far as is possible, the same examination panel will be used.
- 5.14.32 In relation to the examiners' recommendation 5.14.22e above, if the candidate does not resubmit the revised version of their thesis to the Research and Graduate School within the prescribed period, the examination process will be deemed to be concluded and the candidate's enrolment will continue on the masters register.
- 5.14.33 In relation to the examiners' recommendations 5.14.21e and 5.14.22f above, following the submission to the Research and Graduate School of the examiners' report, which should provide a detailed review of the areas in which the thesis is deficient and a clear and comprehensive explanation as to why no degree shall be awarded, the examination process will be deemed to be concluded and the candidate's enrolment will be discontinued. The candidate should be advised in relation to the appeals process as set out in section 5.15.
- 5.14.34 In exceptional circumstances (certified medical or personal reasons), a candidate may, prior to the expiration of the prescribed time periods specified in 5.14.21 and 5.14.22, apply in writing to the Graduate School Director 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. Thus, the candidate's enrolment will continue on the relevant register.
- 5.14.35 A candidate cannot submit their master's or doctoral thesis for examination on more than two occasions.
- 5.14.36 The final outcome of the examination process shall be communicated formally to the candidate by the Research and Graduate School. Neither an examiner nor any other person is empowered to communicate the result formally to a candidate before the result has been officially notified to the candidate by the Research and Graduate School. Where an examiner chooses to give the candidate an informal indication of the recommendation that will be submitted to the Research and Graduate School, the examiner concerned must stress that the recommendation is subject to ratification by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.
- 5.14.37 For candidates who have submitted the final hard-bound copy of their thesis in fulfilment of the requirement(s) specified in the examiners' report, a recommendation for the award of the relevant degree shall be presented to the next relevant Faculty Examination Board for ratification by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.
- 5.14.38 Following ratification of the degree award by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, one copy of the thesis shall be forwarded by the Research and Graduate School to the College Library.
- 5.14.39 Candidates who pursue a joint research degree will comply with the examination requirements of the coordinating institution and with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding and/or Memorandum of Agreement.

5.15 Appeals

- 5.15.1 An appeal cannot be made against the examiners' decision. If the candidate wishes to appeal on the grounds of substantial irregularity in the process, the appeal will be considered as per regulations [SP 4.4.4](#). The appeal must be submitted within 15 working days from the date that the candidate received the examiners' final written report. In consultation with the Vice-President Academic Affairs, the Graduate School Director shall seek *An Chomhairle Acadúil's* permission to withhold the name of the candidate and the examiners' report until after the hearing of the appeal.
- 5.15.2 The result of the appeal, whether upholding the examiners' recommendations or the candidate's appeal, will then be submitted, together with the examiners' report, to *An Chomhairle Acadúil* by the Vice-President Academic Affairs.
- 5.15.3 If *An Chomhairle Acadúil* upholds the student's appeal, the Vice-President Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Graduate School Director and the Dean of Faculty and/or Head of Department concerned, shall invite two further examiners to read the thesis as it stood at the first examination.
- 5.15.4 If the examiners recommend revision and if the registration has lapsed, the candidate must re-register and pay the prescribed fee. The thesis must be revised and resubmitted for examination within a period of registration.

5.16 Review and Interpretation

- 5.16.1 The Vice-President Academic Affairs 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 *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, and its ruling shall be final.
- 5.16.2 The foregoing regulations are subject to review, as required, by *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.

5.17 Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations Appendices

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 Mary Immaculate College may be presented in English, Irish or another language.
2. The Dean of the faculty 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.
3. The Dean of Faculty shall notify the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee of the postgraduate student's intention to present the thesis in a language other than English.
4. Where a postgraduate student, with the approval of their supervisor, proposes to present their thesis in a language other than English, the College must be satisfied that there are members of academic staff competent in the relevant language within the College who are capable of examining the thesis.
5. The Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee shall ensure that the academic staff member being proposed as the internal supervisor/examiner is fully competent in the language in question.
6. 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.
7. 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 relevant Dean of Faculty.
8. An abstract in English or Irish shall accompany each of the three copies of the thesis that are lodged in the Research and Graduate School for examination.
9. 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 doctoral theses). Section 3 presents the specific requirements for the preparation and submission of an article-based thesis (applicable to doctoral theses only).

Only theses prepared in accordance with the requirements specified below are acceptable for the award of higher degrees by research at Mary Immaculate College. 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 three soft-bound copies of the thesis, which they must submit to the Research and Graduate School. The Research and 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 one hard-bound copy and one electronic copy of the final version of the thesis to the Research and Graduate School. The Research and Graduate School will deposit one hard-bound copy and one electronic copy of the thesis in the College Library.

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](#) above.

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:
- 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 their Mary Immaculate College student record) with, if desired, any qualifications or distinctions
 - The award for which the thesis is submitted to the College
 - The name of the college. Where the Mary Immaculate College logo is used at the top of the title page, it must conform to the College's corporate specifications.
 - The name(s) of the supervisor(s) of the research
 - As the last line on the page, the statement 'Submitted to Mary Immaculate College, (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.

1.7 Length of Thesis

- 1.7.1 A master's thesis should not exceed 60,000 words. A doctoral 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:
- The BS ISO 690:2010 standard. This gives guidelines on the name-date, numeric and running notes style. It forms the basis for the guidelines to the Harvard (Name-Date) referencing style specified in the [Referencing](#) section of the UL Library website.
or
 - 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 for a master's thesis and navy for a doctoral thesis. The aforementioned cover colour must conform to the Mary Immaculate College corporate specifications, which are available from the College's Strategic Communications & Marketing (SCM) Office.
- 1.9.2 The front cover of the thesis must contain the following information only:
- The title of the thesis in at least 24-point (8mm) print
 - The name of the candidate: one forename, other forenames initialised and the candidate's surname
 - 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

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 copy to the Research and Graduate School.

1.11 Other Requirements

- 1.11.1 Mary Immaculate College 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 Research and Graduate School, arrange that the code be 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 College 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 included 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 included.

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 thesis.
- 1.12.2 Copyright and other intellectual property (IP) regulations are specified in chapter 5, [PG 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 College Library will retain its copies of the thesis and will make these copies available for consultation, in the library and on Mary Immaculate College Institutional Repository (MIRR), in accordance with normal academic library practice and subject to 1.12.6 and 1.12.7 below.
- 1.12.5 The College 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 Research and Graduate School in relation 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 Research and Graduate School, the College Library shall embargo access to the thesis for a specified time after it has been lodged in the library. This embargo will cease after five years but may be extended at the request of the candidate.
- 1.12.9 Notwithstanding paragraph 1.12.7, a copy of the final version of each thesis completed in Mary Immaculate College must be deposited in the College Library in the interest of academic and historical scholarship.

1.13 Submission and Presentation of Final Thesis to the Faculty Examination Board

- 1.13.1 The final approved thesis must be submitted to the Research and Graduate School no fewer than five working days prior to the meeting of the Faculty Examination Board that will recommend on the award to the candidate in question. The Graduate School Director or nominee will certify to the Faculty Examination Board that the final approved thesis has 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. Alternatively, a monograph-style thesis may be presented within a structure where the relevant chapters are set out in a pre-publication format that facilitates the submission of the relevant chapters for publication.
- 2.2 Students are advised to check with their department that the structure of the thesis conforms to the academic conventions associated with the discipline and for any specifications that may be stipulated by that department. The list below gives a suggested structure for the presentation of material in monograph style.

Title Page

Abstract

Declaration
Acknowledgement (optional)
Dedication (optional)
Table of Contents
List of Tables
List of Figures
List of Appendices
Nomenclature/List of Abbreviations
Body of Thesis
References
Appendices

3. Specific Requirements: Article-based Doctoral Thesis

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 An article-based thesis comprises interrelated but independent research articles (at least three and usually four or five) that are produced by the doctoral 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.
- 3.1.3 The articles must be published, pending publication or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals or, where appropriate to the discipline, as chapters within peer-reviewed academic books. Articles that are in draft form are excluded.
- 3.1.4 An article that is 'pending publication' is defined as one 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 Doctorate

- 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 multiple authors, 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 proofreading 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 Mary Immaculate College policy, doctoral theses submitted in article-based format will be made available electronically in the MIRR 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 final approved version. Prior to submission, candidates should check with the publisher or MIRR administration 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. The MIRR administration will redact any embargoed material and link to the definitive published version from the MIRR record.

Appendix 3

Research Postgraduate Forms

Name of Form	Form Code
Nomination of Examiners for Master's and Doctoral Degrees by Research	PGR-1
Research Confirmation Panel (MA to PHD Transfer Report)	PGR-3a
Research Confirmation Panel (Progression Report)	PGR-3b
Research Progression Appeal Panel Report	PGR-3c
Submission of Thesis for Master's and Doctoral Degrees by Research	PGR-4
Examiners' Report – Master's Degree by Research and Thesis	PGR-5
Examiners' Report for Doctoral Degree	PGR-6
Alteration to Research Degree Supervision	PGR-7
Research Review Panel (Progression) Report	PGR-9

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 on the [Research and Graduate School Intranet](#).

Appendix 4

Structured PhD Programmes

1. Doctor of Philosophy

As with all PhDs, the core component of a Structured PhD programme is the advancement of knowledge through a high-quality experience of original research that is integrated with professional development. The programme will develop the students' research skills and generic and transferable skills through a formalised and integrated programme of activities. Taught modules are integral to this programme of activities and may include both transferable skills development and discipline-specific modules. The choice of specific activities can be tailored to suit the requirements of individual students and to reflect the disciplinary requirements in each broad field.

A Structured PhD programme is created when a group of doctoral supervisors work together to create a coherent shared experience for their Structured PhD students. The programme comprises advanced education, training and research focused on an identified area of study. The Research and Graduate School will establish and publish criteria by which the College will formally recognise, through *An Chomhairle Acadúil*, Structured PhD programmes.

Structured PhD programmes will be managed by a Doctoral Programme Board, which may be inter-institutional, and will work under the direction of a programme coordinator. The Doctoral Programme Board will review the operation of the PhD programme on a regular basis and will be required to ensure that students are acquainted with the regulations relating to their programme of study. A Mary Immaculate College programme coordinator, who is a member of the Doctoral Programme Board, will direct the operation of the programme within the College. The Doctoral Programme Board may formulate local regulations that relate to their programme, thus ensuring that they do not conflict with the College's academic regulations.

2. Entry Requirements, Application Procedures and Registration

An applicant applying for admission onto a Structured PhD programme should, in the first instance, contact the doctoral programme coordinator, who will advise on the applicant's suitability to make an application to a participating institution for a position on the programme.

All students applying to Mary Immaculate College must fulfil the College's admissions requirements and procedures, including those relating to specific programme requirements as outlined in chapter 5. Applicants will formally be considered for admission at the monthly meeting of the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee and processed by the Research and Graduate School. The candidates will be registered on the PhD register in accordance with the regulations specified in chapter 5.

3. Research Supervision

The Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee will approve a principal supervisor of the candidate's research and, where appropriate, may approve a second and additional supervisor(s) on the recommendation of the College programme coordinator and with the approval of the relevant Head(s) of Department.

The principal supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of the College whose appointment has been approved by the Executive Team. The principal supervisor will be an active researcher in the broad area of the student's research topic and will usually hold a doctoral degree.

Where a supervisor retires or resigns from the staff of the College or for any other reason is unable to continue to supervise the research, the Head of Department shall inform the Research and Graduate School. On the recommendation of the Head of Department and College programme coordinator, the Doctoral Programme Board shall make appropriate arrangements for the supervision of the student, including, where required, the appointment of a new supervisor. New supervisory arrangements need to be approved by the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee.

The research for the PhD degree shall largely be carried out under the direct supervision of the supervisor(s), which may include research visits to other institutions. However, if a substantial proportion or all of the research is to be carried out elsewhere under the general supervision of the supervisor(s), the prior approval of the Research and Graduate School must be sought. The Doctoral Programme Board may permit research to be conducted elsewhere on a case-by-case basis or may establish formal mechanisms for the inter-institutional mobility of research students in the context of inter-institutional graduate programmes. The arrangements for the inter-institutional mobility of research students shall be subject to review by the Doctoral Programme Board and to any policy on credit transfer that the College may establish.

4. Structured PhD Programme

The PhD degree is awarded on the successful completion of a structured programme of research, study, and personal and professional development, prescribed by the supervisor(s), with the advice of the Structured PhD Supervisory Panel. Structured PhD programmes shall comply with the policies and regulations of the College and such guidelines as may be published by the Research and Graduate School.

The College records work conducted in the pursuit of research degrees on a credit basis; one calendar year of full-time research is considered to be equivalent to 90 ECTS credits. Where research is conducted on a part-time basis or combined with taught activity, the credit value of the research activity must reflect the actual time devoted by the student to research.

The total credits from a combination of the taught and research elements of a Structured PhD will not be fewer than 300 and not more than 360 ECTS credits. Within these overall limits, the credits for the Structured PhD are made up as follows:

- A research thesis equivalent to 270 ECTS credits
- Discipline-specific modules, research skills and generic and transferable skills to a maximum of 90 credits

A Structured PhD programme will usually consist of two stages. Stage 1 will largely comprise technical/subject-specific courses and generic skills training alongside early-stage research. Stage 2 will largely focus on the research leading to the completion of the thesis but may also include some further coursework and training.

Credit for taught modules is awarded after satisfactory completion of the modules and successful completion of any associated assessment.

Research and generic skills training, including experiential research training, may also be delivered as modules with credit values determined by the student effort involved, specified learning outcomes and appropriate assessments. The credit for such modules is awarded after satisfactory completion of the modules and successful completion of any associated assessment.

Credit for original PhD research activity shall only be awarded where the work conducted has been assessed on the basis of a submitted thesis in acceptable form and deemed to be of a satisfactory standard.

Students will be required to agree educational, training, and personal and professional development needs with their Structured PhD Supervisory Panel, which, along with the proposed programme of research, will inform the development of a Personal Development Plan (PDP). The Structured PhD Supervisory Panel will monitor progress against the prescribed programme of research and study and the PDP on a regular basis but at least once per year. Where the Structured PhD Supervisory Panel considers that progress or the arrangements for supervision of the student are not adequate, and such inadequacies cannot be resolved, the Structured PhD Supervisory Panel will inform the Head of Department, the College programme coordinator and the Research and Graduate School. New supervisory arrangements need to be approved by the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee.

5. Progression for Students on Structured PhD Programmes

The Doctoral Programme Board will establish appropriate processes and procedures to monitor the progress of individual PhD students registered in the department or programme and to assess each student formally at the end of Stage 1 of the Structured PhD. These processes and procedures will comply with the regulations and policies of the College and with such guidelines as may be agreed from time to time by the College or the Doctoral Programme Board. The processes and procedures should be reviewed at appropriate intervals by the Research and Graduate School.

The Doctoral Programme Board will establish an Assessment Panel or Panels to assess the progress of the student and their competence and capacity to complete a doctorate at the end of Stage 1 and at any other suitable point in the programme. The Assessment Panel must have the experience and disciplinary expertise to conduct the assessment. The Assessment Panel will base its judgement at the end of Stage 1 on a written statement of progress and a research plan from the candidate, a written progress report from the principal supervisor, and satisfactory completion of the modules in Stage 1. These may be integrated into the PDP. The Assessment Panel may also require the student to make a presentation and may interview the student and/or the principal supervisor. The Assessment Panel will, subject to review by the Head of Department and College programme coordinator, make one of the following recommendations to the Research and Graduate School:

- (i) That the student should progress to Stage 2 of the Structured PhD
- (ii) That the student should resubmit for further assessment after a prescribed period
- (iii) That the student should transfer to another graduate programme
- (iv) That the student should graduate with a graduate diploma or master's degree, subject to the regulations of the relevant Structured PhD programme
- (v) That the student's registration be terminated and that the student be awarded a certificate of credit for any modules for which credit has been awarded

The Assessment Panel or Research and Graduate School may recommend a second formal assessment of progress and competence within Stage 2 of the Structured PhD, or such an assessment may be a normal element of a Structured PhD. This will most often occur where there are substantial taught and research training elements in Stage 1 and insufficient opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate capacity to pursue original doctoral research. The Structured PhD Supervisory Panel will recommend the nature and timing of any such assessment. The formal Confirmation Process for continuation on the PhD register will normally occur after this second formal assessment, or in programmes that do not implement a second formal assessment, after the assessment at the end of Stage 1.

6. Responsibilities of Candidates

Candidates are required to pursue the programme of research, study, and personal and professional development prescribed by the supervisor(s) and to work with their supervisor(s) to meet the requirements articulated in the PDP.

Candidates cannot register concurrently for another programme without the approval of the Research and Graduate School.

When undertaking their research, candidates must comply with the College's research regulations, policies and guidelines, including guidelines on research ethics.

7. Preparation and Submission of the Thesis for Examination

The preparation of the thesis for submission should conform to the College's academic regulations and procedures as outlined in chapter 5, [Appendix 2](#).

8. Examination of the Thesis

Existing Mary Immaculate College procedures, as outlined in chapter 5, will apply and will be supplemented by the following provisions:

- All matters relating to the examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of previously unpublished material contained in a candidate's thesis until such time as the thesis has been deposited in the College Library and is publicly available.
- A final approved copy of each thesis on the basis of which the degree of PhD has been awarded shall be submitted to the Research and Graduate School for deposition in the College Library.
- All theses remain the property of Mary Immaculate College. All issues relating to intellectual property will be subject to the College's practices and policies.

9. Official Transcript

All taught courses, including technical/subject-specific courses and transferable skills training events, will be recorded on the student's final transcript. Technical/subject-specific courses will be graded as per the regulations in chapter 5. Transferable skills courses will be graded on a pass/fail basis. An "Audit" grade will be used to give formal recognition on the student's transcript of courses for which the student attended no less than 80% of the contact hours for the course but did not participate in the assessment instruments of the course.

Appendix 5

Professional Doctorate Programmes: (Doctor of ...)

1. Professional Doctorate

A professional doctorate is a practice-based (or practitioner work-based) level 10 specialist qualification that incorporates both a taught and research component. The qualification, which is designed to promote professional development in a specific academic discipline, is normally pursued on a part-time basis. For some professions, the qualification is an entry-level requirement. The general aim of these higher degrees is to develop novel approaches to integrating academic and professional knowledge. Professional practice is a key tenet for the experienced professionals undertaking the qualification because the candidate taking the professional doctorate programme is expected to make a contribution to both theory and practice in their field. The final award shall be determined in accordance with chapter 2, section 2.9 of this handbook.

Common to all professional doctorate qualifications and in keeping with the traditional PhD is the completion by the candidate of an original piece of research presented as a thesis and examined by an expert in the relevant field. The research project usually relates to 'real-life' issues in a professional practice context. Professional doctorates generally include taught elements, such as lectures, seminars, workshops and practice-based placement. Such elements are formally assessed through a combination of course work, examinations, practical demonstrations and a thesis.

While both a professional doctorate and traditional/structured PhD qualification confer a doctorate-level qualification on a successful candidate, the two qualifications are distinct in format and function. A PhD is a research-based doctoral programme of study of an academic nature where a total value of 270 ECTS credits is assigned to the thesis. While a professional doctorate programme is as challenging as a PhD and culminates in a qualification of equal status to a PhD, it is more appropriate for those wishing to pursue professional, industry-based rather than academic careers or those who are interested in gaining accreditation or reflecting on and adding to best practice.

2. Entry Requirements, Application Procedures and Registration

A person who wishes to apply to Mary Immaculate College for admission onto a professional doctorate programme should, in the first instance, contact the relevant programme coordinator, who will advise on the applicant's suitability to the programme.

Applicants must fulfil the College's academic regulations and procedures (chapter 5, section 5.4), including those relating to specific programme requirements as advised by the doctoral programme coordinator. Applicants apply for a place on a specific professional doctoral programme through the College's online taught postgraduate application system, which is accessible through the College website. Applications for a professional doctorate programme are not processed by the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee.

Registration for the programme must be completed prior to the end of Week 1 of the first semester during which the programme commences.

3. Research Supervision

The candidate will be assigned a principal supervisor in line with the academic regulations for supervisory panels and supervision (chapter 5, section 5.5). For particular professional doctorate programmes, an additional external supervisor may be appointed to support the candidate. However, this appointment should not conflict with the academic regulations that apply to supervision or to the appointment of external examiners.

4. Programme Structure

The taught and research elements of the programme are interdependent. Therefore, an un-denominated degree award with a nomenclature of Doctor of [Profession Name] is awarded on the successful completion of a programme of taught modules where a cumulative QCA of 3.00 or greater has been

attained and a thesis has been examined and deemed to be satisfactory. Progression is based on the successful completion of a series of modules, one of which deals specifically with the candidate's research to date. Due to the nature of the professional doctorate qualification, candidates must complete any amendments that are prescribed by the thesis examiners within the agreed timeframe as defined by the relevant professional doctorate programme board.

The professional doctorate carries a total value of 270 ECTS credits. The research thesis related to a particular professional doctorate programme should be worth no fewer than 135 and no more than 200 ECTS credits. Due to the nature of the professional doctorate programme, it is not usual to have an exit award. However, if an exit award is approved by the University of Limerick for a professional doctorate programme, cognisance must be taken of the proportion of discipline-specific content completed within the taught element of the programme. In terms of the title of the exit award, it is important for the Doctoral Programme Board to ensure that the title does not conflict with a full programme award title from another institution.

Because the professional doctorate is a discrete programme, candidates registered on a professional doctorate cannot transfer to a research master's or traditional/structured PhD programme.

5. Responsibilities of Candidates

Candidates are required to pursue the programme of research, study, and personal and professional development defined within the programme and adhere to the deadlines specified within each specific module. As the programme follows the regulations for taught programmes, candidates will not be granted extensions beyond semester grading deadlines.

Candidates cannot register concurrently for another programme without the approval of the Research and Graduate School.

When undertaking their research, candidates must comply with the College's research regulations, policies and guidelines, including guidelines on research ethics.

6. Preparation of the Thesis

The preparation of the thesis should conform to the College's academic regulations and procedures as outlined in chapter 5, [Appendix 2](#).

7. Examination of the Thesis

The relevant professional doctorate programme coordinator and/or Doctoral Programme Board is responsible for nominating examiners, administering the *viva voce* and submitting the final examination result to the Student Academic Administration Office. In terms of the examination of the thesis, section 5.14 of chapter 5 applies to the selection of examiners and to the *viva voce* examination. In addition, cognisance should be taken for the following points:

- In some professional doctorate programmes, external examiners may be appointed to examine a cohort of candidates on a programme.
- All matters relating to the examination of the thesis must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of previously unpublished material contained in a candidate's thesis until such time as the thesis has been deposited in the College Library. All theses remain the property of Mary Immaculate College. All matters pertaining to copyright and intellectual property shall be dealt with under section 5.13 of chapter 5.
- Some external professional bodies operate within a regulatory framework that requires candidates who have been awarded a professional doctorate to comply and register with the body that oversees their profession.
- Any appeal of the thesis examination outcome will be dealt with under section 5.15 of chapter 5.

Appendix 6

Joint Research Degrees

Mary Immaculate College (MIC) and the University of Limerick support links and collaborations with other appropriate partners, including higher education institutions and industry partners. Where appropriate and in line with MIC's strategic goals, the University of Limerick will enter into agreement, on an individual-case or cohort basis, with such higher education partner institutions for accrediting and awarding a joint research degree to students who undertake their higher research degree at MIC and at partner institution(s). As per the UL [Policy on Collaborative and Transnational Education Provision](#), applications to engage in joint research degrees must be approved by the Standing Panel on Collaborations (SPC) by way of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and/or Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the partner institutions and signed in accordance with UL's [Signing Authority Policy](#).

1. Definitions

- 1.1 Joint research degree: An award at NFQ level 9 or 10 or equivalent jointly made by MIC and one or more partner institutions to a student who has studied for their higher research degree at MIC *and* at one or more of these partner institutions.
- 1.2 Lead institution: The institution of the primary supervisor and where the relevant administrative, examination and financial processes are undertaken and accepted as meeting the requirements of the partner institutions.
- 1.3 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): This is a non-legally binding document that expresses an intention to cooperate with another partner institution but does not commit MIC to a specific collaborative programme.
- 1.4 Memorandum of Agreement (MoA): This is a legally binding written agreement that commits the institutions to a specific activity.

2. Mary Immaculate College and University of Limerick Consent

- 2.1 For joint degrees, permission to proceed with the development of an MoU must be obtained from the SPC. Once approval is gained, an MoU must be developed. In addition, an MoA may be required, which would take precedence over the MoU.
- 2.2 An MoU and/or MoA will be drawn up for each approved joint research award proposal prior to the student's application to enrol in MIC. The MoU and/or MoA from a lead institution other than MIC will ensure that:
 - The research project title is identified and the aims, objectives, research methodology and project description is included.
 - The duties and responsibilities of the participating institutions are identified.
 - Supervisors are identified and supervision arrangements are consistent with MIC's regulations.
 - The financial responsibilities of the partner institutions are identified.
 - A lead institution is identified from the participating institutions to manage student recruitment, progression, thesis examination and research project management. On request, the lead institution will provide these details to the participating institutions.
 - Approval from MIC's Vice-President Academic Affairs or nominee is required for the appointment of external examiners.
 - The intellectual property of the participating institutions is protected.
 - A time limit for the life of the MoU and/or MoA is specified.
 - A termination and dispute resolution process is specified.

If there is more than one institution involved in the collaboration, a single MoU and/or MoA – preferably that of the lead institution – should be agreed.

2.3 Where MIC is not the lead institution, the student must spend a minimum of one fee-paying year at MIC.

2.4 Where MIC is the lead institution, the student can spend a maximum of two years at the partner institution(s).

3. Application/Enrolment

3.1 Whether or not MIC is the lead institution, all applicants on joint award programmes will apply through the normal MIC process ([PG 5.3](#)).

3.2 The approved MoU and/or MoA agreement must be attached to the student's application. Where MIC is not the lead institution, the application must be accompanied by confirmation that the applicant has enrolled at the lead institution. If MIC is the lead institution, the Research and Graduate School will supply a letter confirming enrolment to the partner institution.

3.3 In conjunction with 3.1 and 3.2 above, a change to joint award degree status for current students will be considered by review of an MoU and/or MoA. Any amendment must be approved in line with the [UL Policy on Collaborative and Transnational Education Provision](#).

4. Yearly Progression

4.1 Where MIC is the lead institution, the normal progression regulations apply ([PG 5.6](#)). For research students who are researching at a partner institution (as a resident and not on a short visit) at the time of the progression panels, the supervisor must furnish a report to the progression panel, outlining the progress of the research to date and indicating the dates of the visit. The outcome of the progression process will be conveyed by the MIC supervisor to the partner institution.

4.2 Where MIC is not the lead institution, the progression regulations of the lead institution apply. The MIC supervisor will be responsible for informing the relevant MIC progression panel of the decision of the lead institution and, where necessary, the subsequent outcome of the lead institution's progression process.

5. Examination

5.1 Where MIC is not the lead institution, the supervisor will arrange for the outcome of the final examination to be notified to the MIC Research and Graduate School by submission of a copy of the examiner's report. Recommendation of the award will be noted at the relevant MIC Faculty Examination Boards, with ratification taking place at *An Chomhairle Acadúil*.

5.2 Where MIC is the lead institution, the Research and Graduate School will forward a copy of the external examiner's report to the relevant office of the partner institution.

6. Parchments

6.1 The content and design, position of crests and signatures on parchments must be approved and the details included in the MoU and/or MoA.