Quality Assurance Handbook

Version 4.1

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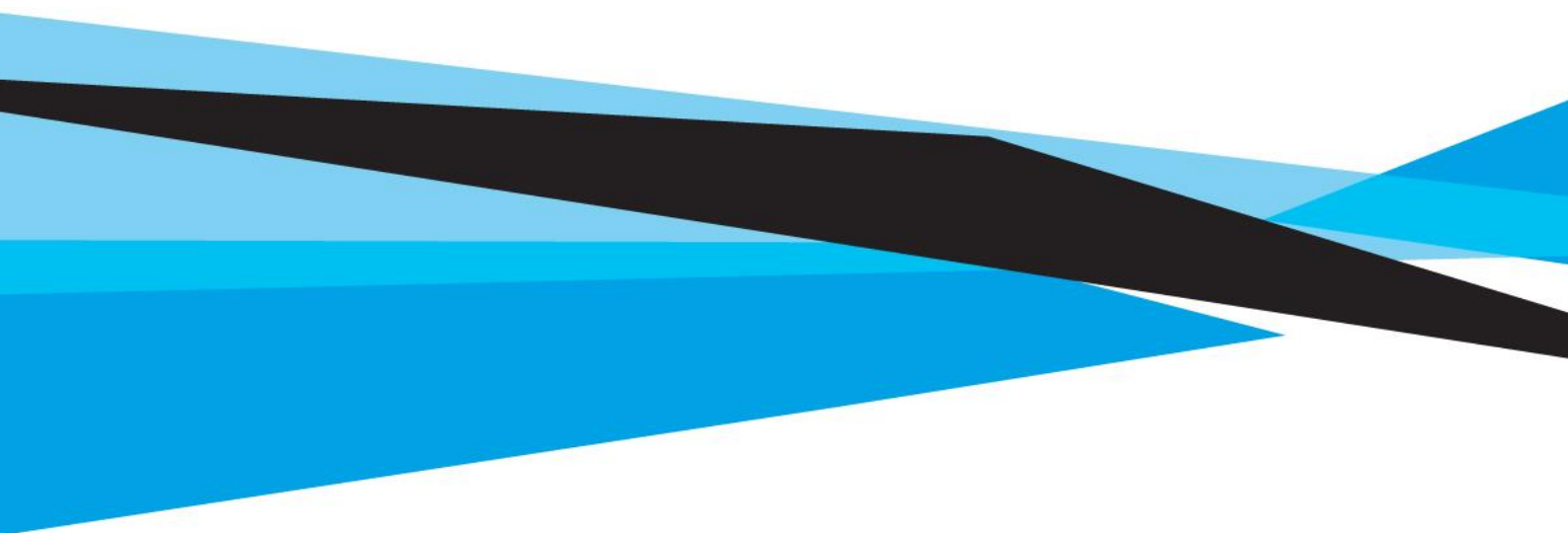
Document Approval

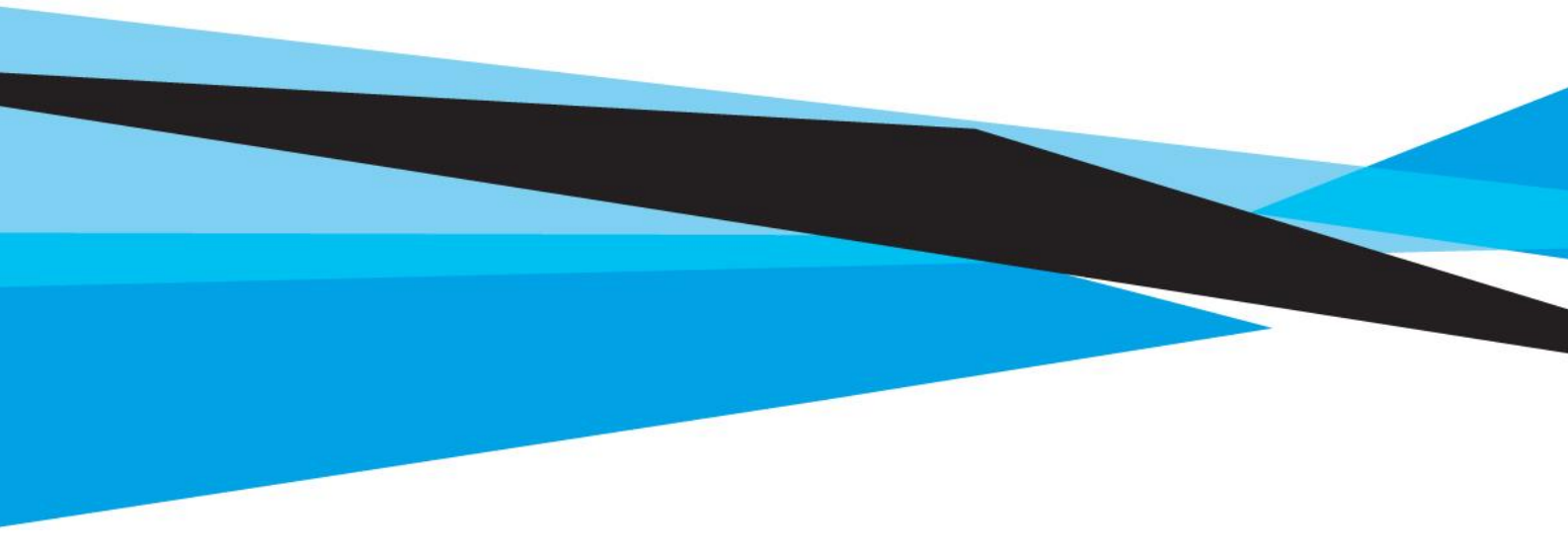| Policy Owner	VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar's Office
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Chapter 7

Research

Chapter 7 Research

7.1 Research Overview

This chapter of the QAH outlines LYIT's policy and procedures for the admission; registration; transfer of registration; assessment; and the award of degrees by research. At LYIT, research activity is integrated with teaching and learning; academic enterprise; and regional development.   LYIT will:

1. Implement a consistent quality framework for all postgraduate research activities.
2. Improve the coordination of research funding; underpinned by effective foresight, review and performance measurement systems.
3. Undertake research in our 3 Faculties that informs teaching and builds a platform for strong research in strategically important areas.
4. Ensure a balance between different types of research undertaken by both single investigators and large multi-disciplinary teams working with and for our stakeholders.
5. Embed knowledge and the commercialisation of intellectual property into institutional activity and reward researchers accordingly.

The following structure for Research and Innovation has been adopted by LYIT:

Figure 7.1 Structure of Research at LYIT
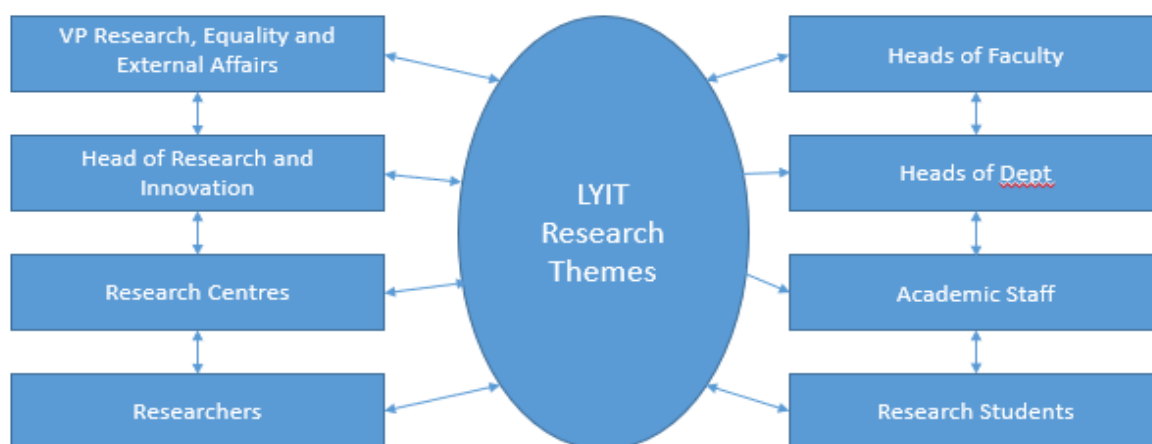
The development of research and innovation at LYIT is driven by the three Faculties. Individual Faculties devise plans to implement the objectives of LYIT's strategy. All aspects of research are aligned with the overall aims of the institute. To this end each Faculty maps all research activity (publications; taught Masters Programmes; Research Masters Programmes; Doctoral studies; and funded research) to the LYIT Research Strategy. Decisions about future/further research activity must align with the one of the four research themes; and must inform Teaching and Learning and/or support academic enterprise.

To achieve this vision LYIT's Research Strategy proposes six key objectives:

1. To focus on research which aligns with national priorities and has business and societal impact.
2. To prioritise research in four strategic areas.

3. To provide funding, training and time allocations to our active researchers.
4. To continue to inform Teaching and Learning through our research.
5. To retain and develop strategic partnerships with other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and research centres.
6. To improve the dissemination of our research at conferences, books and appropriate peer-review journals.

7.1.1 Quality Assurance of Research

The Quality Assurance (QA) of research comprises all the techniques, systems and resources that are employed at LYIT either by a staff researcher; a student researcher; in a research centre; or as part of a research consortium. QA of research is typically concerned with:

- The responsibilities of those involved in the research.
- Accurate and ethical project planning.
- The professional development and competence of research staff.
- The appropriateness of facilities and equipment.
- The documentation of procedures and methods.
- The maintenance of research records.
- The handling of samples and materials.

Professional research practice: Researchers at LYIT will follow the highest ethical standards in conducting their research. Honesty, integrity, openness, accountability and fairness will inform all research practice. Within the limits imposed by the requirements of confidentiality, debate on and reasoned criticism of research work are essential to the research process. In addition, researchers should be open to having their research reviewed by the Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC) and the Postgraduate Research Advisory Board (PRAB).

Securing and storing research data: Researchers are required to keep clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed and of the results obtained; including interim results. Data generated in the course of research (including electronic data) as per GDPR.

Development of professional competence and good practice: LYIT through a Faculty based approach in partnership with the Research and Innovation Office will provide training opportunities; and seed funding to help maintain existing research capability and to create new research activity.

Leadership and cooperation in research groups: Positive and fair leadership within our research teams is a priority. Lead researchers endeavour to create an environment of mutual cooperation in which all group members are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open exchange of ideas is fostered.

Supervising and guiding research students: There is a responsibility on the Heads of Faculty and the supervisors to ensure that good practices are learned and followed. The role and responsibilities of the supervisors and the students are outlined in section 7.4.

7.2   Governance

The Governance of research activity at LYIT is as follows:

7.2.1   Governing Body

The Governing Body holds the function of approving annual programmes and budgets and determining numbers and terms of conditions of staff subject to the approval of the Minister.

7.2.2   Academic Council

Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of research activity; and works to protect, maintain and develop the code of practice for research and associated standards.

Academic Council Research Committee

The Research Committee is a sub-committee of the Academic Council. Its main role is to advise the Academic Council on all aspects of quality assurance relating to research activity. The committee has the following responsibilities:

- To advise the VP for Research, Equality and External Affairs and the Head of Research and Innovation on the design and implementation of a Research Strategy.
- provide oversight and review of quality assurance of Research.
- To review research activity across the institute and seek continuous improvement in the research ethos of the institute.
- To promote the holding of annual research seminars, covering policies and procedures, as well as training in research methods and dissemination skills, and to advise on the annual Research Calendar.
- To support development programmes for supervisors and others participants in research and training programmes for research students.

7.2.3   The VP for Research, Equality and External Affairs

The VP for Research, Equality and External Affairs is responsible for:
- Co-ordinating research activity.
- Development of the Research and Innovation Strategy.
- Co-ordinating the Institute Research Ethics Committee and maintaining a register of their decisions.

7.2.4   The Heads of Faculty

The Heads of Faculty will be responsible for the quality assurance of research activity in their Faculty. The Head of Faculty is specifically, responsible for the following:
- Academic leadership of research activity
- Working with Executive Board to encourage multi-disciplinary research.
- Co-ordinate bi-annual reviews of postgraduate research with in their Faculty.
- Co-ordinate the work of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.
- Report on research activity annually in their Executive Board report.

7.2.5 The VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar

The VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar is responsible for the quality assurance of all academic programmes, including postgraduate research degrees. The VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar is specifically responsible for the following:

- To update policies and procedures for postgraduate research degrees, as approved by the Academic Council.
- The appointment of Examiners to postgraduate degree programmes.
- To propose Examiners.
- The publication of the annual Research Calendar in association with the Head of RDI.
- To deal with complaints/appeals as per procedures.

In addition, the Office of the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar will:

- Maintain the Institute's Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree Registers.
- Admit and register postgraduate research students onto the Institute's postgraduate research Registers, and propose students at level 10 for QQI registration, as approved by the PRAB.
- Provide approved Examiners of postgraduate research degree programmes with all necessary documentation and contracts.
- Convene Examination Award Boards and organise conferring of awards.

7.2.6 VP for Finance and Corporate Services

The VP for Finance and Corporate Services has executive responsibility to oversee support for research activities from the Finance, Human Resources and Estates offices.

7.2.7 The Research and Innovation Office

The Research and Innovation (R&I) Office is responsible for research support and coordination. The R&I office:

- Works with Executive Board, Heads of Faculty /Department and the VP for Research, Equality and External affairs to implement the Research and Innovation Strategy.
- Liaises with senior management at Executive Board level.
- Works with Institute management to plan for and deliver the buildings, equipment and facilities required by the LYIT's research and innovation community.
- Communicates new research and innovation and funding opportunities to the research community.
- Collaborates with the Finance Office, HR office, Estates Office and coordinates the monitoring and reporting requirements of each research project.
- Acts for the Institute in its interactions with all major funding bodies.
- Liaises with the commercial sector and enterprise to identify and promote new opportunities for technology transfer, collaborative research and consultancy.
- Measures research and innovation performance using appropriate metrics and a process of benchmarking against national and international best practice.

The Head of R&I is responsible for the management of research and innovation at LYIT. The Head of R&I will work in collaboration with the Executive Board; Academic Council and the Heads of Faculty. The Head of R&I is specifically, responsible for:

- The development, monitoring, and review of the Research and Innovation Strategy

- The management of the research and innovation budget.
- Advising the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar in the preparation of the annual Research Calendar.
- Preparation of a research registration and transfer proposals for the Postgraduate Regulations Advisory Board (PRAB).
- Promoting research and innovation actions throughout the Institute, to partners and prospective partners.
- Organising and managing the induction process for research degree students,
- Co-ordinating the delivery of the Level 9 Certificate in Research Practice and Development.
- Planning of programmes of training for new and existing supervisors.
- Facilitating the annual reporting of research activity within: Faculties; Centres; and groups.
- Managing and coordinating research activity across the Institute in collaboration with the Heads of Faculty; PRAB; and the various Research Centres and Groups.

7.2.7 The Postgraduate Research Advisory Board (PRAB)

The primary function of the Postgraduate Research Advisory Board (PRAB) is to assist and advise the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar in monitoring the overall registration, assessment and examination of candidates for the Institute's research degree programmes. The Chairperson sends reports from this Board to Academic Council, which is responsible for making recommendations to the Governing Body for the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of students. PRAB consists of the Head of Research and Innovation; the VP of Research, Equality and External Affairs, the three Heads of Faculty or nominated Head of Department; Chairperson of the Academic Council's Research Committee; three academic representatives (normally holders of a level 10 award); the Senior Lecturer for Quality Assurance; an external academic advisor as nominated by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar; and a postgraduate research student as nominated by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. PRAB meets twice per year (typically, in September and April) and thereafter on an *ad hoc* basis as required. In cases of matters arising for consideration by the PRAB at other times, a sub-committee comprising three members of the Board can be convened by the Chairperson. PRAB will normally serve for three years (aligned with the term of Academic Council). Since requests for registrations, transfers and examination of candidates often occur periodically throughout the year, the Chairperson may liaise with the other members of PRAB and the external panel member as required to seek their advice or approval in relation to these requests rather than convene a meeting.

The terms of reference of PRAB are to:
- Review and approve all new applications for registration to research degree programmes.
- Approve the results of any qualifying examination process as required to support a registration application.
- Review the annual assessment reports and approve the annual renewal of registrations.
- Review and approve applications for transfer between postgraduate research degree registers.
- Provide advice on the approval of Internal and External Examiners as required.
- Advise on professional development opportunities for research supervisors and research students.
- Deal with appeals and complaints as appropriate.

In addition, PRAB in partnership with the Head of R&I and the Heads of Faculty has a key role in informing and facilitating the dissemination and exchange of research findings and the further development of an Institute research culture.

7.2.8   The Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC)

The IREC will oversee good practice in ethical research and work to develop the Institute's ethics policies and procedures and relevant forms. It will also:
- Hear appeals to decisions made by the Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs).
- Provide guidance as required to the FRECs.
- Provide ethical approval for research degree students (Research Masters and PhDs).
- Provide ethical approval as necessary to staff who are conducting postgraduate studies at another institution.
- Provide ethical approval as necessary for externally funded research.

7.2.9   The Faculty Review Board and Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Each Faculty conducts annual reviews of their research students. The aim is to monitor and improve the ongoing delivery of the research degree programmes. Monitoring of progress of the student researcher involves three elements:
- The research supervisor(s) through regular scheduled meetings and discussions with the student.
- The bi-annual progress review process. During this process the research student and supervisor will complete the relevant form (appendix 1); and the student will attend a progress review interview with another Research Supervisor; an External Expert; and another Research Student.
- The Head of Faculty submits an Annual Student Progress Report to PRAB; and responds to any resulting recommendations.

Student progress is assessed by PRAB once per-annum using the Student Progress Reports and a formal recommendation with regard to registration is sent by PRAB to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar.

7.3   Postgraduate Research Degrees

7.3.1   Award Standards

LYIT's award standards for Level 9 Research Degrees and Level 10 Research Degrees are detailed below.

As per the NFQ the learning outcomes relate to the application of knowledge, understanding and problem solving abilities related to a field of study. The outcomes are associated with an ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgments. Outcomes associated with this level link with employment as a senior professional or manager with responsibility for the work outputs of teams.

Examiners should assess and may recommend a Level 9 Degree by Research in accordance with the following general criteria:
  a. This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training

b.   Examiners should assess and may recommend the Level 9 Award in accordance with the following general criteria:

Table 7.1 Criteria for assessing a Level 9 Degree by Research

Title	Masters Degree (NFQ – Level 9)
Knowledge Breadth	A systematic understanding of knowledge at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning
Knowledge Kind	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning
Know-how and skill-range	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques
Know-how and skill selectivity	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques
Competence Context	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts
Competence Role	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; Lead and initiate activity
Competence Learning to learn	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development
Competence - Insight	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them
Progression Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to Doctoral Degree, or to another Masters Degree or to a Postgraduate Diploma

Source: QQI (2015)

All new entrants to a Level 9 Research Degree programme shall be registered for an appropriate award title selected from the list in Appendix 3.1.

7.3.2   Standard to be attained by Level 10 Degree Candidates

The award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Professional Doctorate are made at level 10 of the NFQ. The learning outcomes at this level relate to the discovery and development of new knowledge and skills and the delivery of findings at the frontiers of knowledge and application. This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skills and competences acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and access to additional education and training. Examiners should assess and may recommend a Level 10 Award in accordance with the following general criteria:

Table 7.2 QQI Criteria for assessing a Level 10 Degree

Title	Doctoral Degree – NFQ Level 10
Knowledge Breadth	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning
Knowledge Kind	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers

Know-how and skill-range	Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials
Know-how and skill Selectivity	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge
Competence Context	Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts
Competence Role	Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes
Competence Learning to Learn	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts
Competence - Insight	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them

Source: QQI (2015)

7.3.3   Duration of Research Study

Level 9 Research Programme*:* Students can register either on a full-time or part-time basis. The normal duration for full-time students on a Level 9 research programme is two years. Normally full-time students may not submit a thesis within their first year of study. PRAB may grant a time extension of up to an additional one year for thesis submission. Under exceptional circumstances an extension beyond three years may be granted. The normal duration for part-time students on a Level 9 research programme is three years. Normally, part-time students may not submit a thesis before two years. PRAB may grant a time extension of an additional one year for thesis submission. Under exceptional circumstances an extension beyond five years may be granted.

Level 10 PhD Programme: Students can register either on a full-time or part-time basis. The normal duration for full-time students on a Level 10 research programme is four years. Normally, full-time students may not submit a thesis before the end of year three. PRAB may grant a time extension of up to an additional two years for thesis submission. Under exceptional circumstances an extension beyond six years may be granted. The normal duration for part-time students on a Level 10 research programme is six years. Normally, part-time students will not submit a thesis before the end of year three. PRAB may grant a time extension of an additional year for thesis submission. Under exceptional circumstances an extension beyond seven years may be granted.

Level 10 Professional Doctorate: the normal duration for students on a Level 10 Professional Doctorate is four years. Students may not submit a thesis until the end of year four. The Head of Faculty may grant a time extension of up to an additional two years for thesis submission. Under exceptional circumstances an extension beyond six years may be granted by PRAB.

7.3.4   Admission and Registration

The admission criteria for a Level 9 Degree by Research takes cognisance of the nature of knowledge, skills and competences required for the successful completion of a typical Level 9 research degree programme:

1. Candidates hold a recognised academic qualification.
2. Candidates have achieved at least an Honours Bachelor Degree with a performance equivalent to at least second class honours. The Bachelor's qualification must be in a field of study directly related to the subject matter of the Level 9 research degree.
3. Candidates hold a recognised professional qualification (which requires professional experience and work achievement) and which testifies to the possession of the required knowledge, skills and competences.
4. Candidates have demonstrated the required knowledge, skills and competences by passing a qualifying examination conducted by an approved or accredited provider.
5. The minimum IELTS standard for international postgraduate research students is 7.0 or equivalent. With a TOEFL Score 600 (paper based) and a TOEFL Score 250 (computer based).

Admission to a Level 10 Award

The admission criteria for a Level 10 research degree programme take cognisance of the nature of the knowledge, skills. The competences required for a Level 10 programme include:

- Candidates have achieved at least an Honours Bachelor Degree with a performance equivalent of at least second class upper division honours. The Bachelor's qualification must be in a field of study directly related to the subject matter of the Doctorate.
- Candidates who have set out on a Level 9 research programme and successfully completed a transfer examination.
- Candidates holding a Level 9 award in a related area.
- Candidates who hold recognised academic qualifications determined to be at least equivalent to the requirements indicated by the preceding points.
- Candidates with a recognised professional qualification (which requires a high level of professional experience and work achievement) and which testifies to the possession of the required knowledge, skill and competence.
- Candidates who have demonstrated the required the knowledge, skills and competences by passing a qualifying examination conducted by an approved or accredited provider.
- The minimum IELTS standard for international postgraduate research students is 7.0 or equivalent. With a TOEFL Score 600 (paper based) and a TOEFL Score 250 (computer based).

7.3.5   Supervision

Academic supervision is central to the successful completion of postgraduate research work. The supervisor(s) play a key role in designing the research project, guiding the postgraduate student in his/her work, maintaining the general direction of the research, setting and maintaining appropriate targets for academic standards along with preparing the student for submission of their final thesis for examination. Each registered postgraduate research student at LYIT will have a supervisory team which is normally composed of a Principal Supervisor and at least one Co-Supervisor.

All proposed Principal Supervisors and Co-Supervisors must hold either a Masters (level 9) to supervise at level 9 or a Level 10 to supervise at Level 10.

The supervisor(s) should work with the student to establish an effective supervisory relationship. The relevant Head of Faculty will ensure that the quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of an excessive volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors. Before agreeing to supervise a research student, supervisors in consultation with the Head of Faculty should satisfy themselves that:

1. The supervisor has the necessary knowledge and expertise to supervise the project and that they are research active as evidenced appropriately.
2. That the project is appropriate for the level of degree and can reasonably be undertaken with the resources available and within the required time-scale.
3. The supervisor is confident, as far as is possible, that the student is capable of undertaking the project successfully.

The relevant Head of Faculty in conjunction with the Head of R&I will ensure that appropriate training is available to new and existing supervisors.

The supervisory team must be research active in the relevant discipline(s), to ensure that the direction and monitoring of the student's progress is informed by up-to-date subject knowledge and research developments.

The following allocations are made by LYIT in respect of the supervision of research degrees:

- Level 9 award by Research: 2 hours per week per semester for 2 years divided as appropriate between the supervisory team.
- Level 10: 2 hours per week per semester for 4 years divided as appropriate between the supervisory team.

It is the responsibility of the lead supervisor to ensure that there are at least 6 meetings per semester and that the meetings are recorded on the appropriate Faculty form.

Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor should meet the following requirements:

1. Be a full-time academic member of the staff of LYIT.
2. Have academic qualifications at least at the level of the award being sought by the candidate in the broad discipline-area of the proposed research project.
3. Have experience and have successfully supervised at least one Research Degree student to completion at the appropriate level at a recognised HEI.
4. Be research active and have a demonstrable track record in the relevant research field.
5. Support the student in preparing for progress reviews and as applicable for the Confirmation of Assessment process.

Where a Principal Supervisor does not satisfy all the requirements laid out above, a Mentoring Supervisor must be appointed to supervise on the programme of study.

Co-Supervisor

To act in the role of Co-Supervisor, a supervisor will:

1. Be a current member of academic staff of LYIT or another recognised HEI.
2. Have academic qualifications at least at the level of the award being sought by the candidate in the broad discipline-area of the proposed research project.
3. Have experience and demonstrated ability to supervise Research Degree students at the appropriate level.
4. Support the student in preparing for progress reviews and as applicable for the Confirmation of Assessment process.

Mentoring Supervisor

PRAB may ask the Head of Faculty to appoint a mentoring supervisor to a Research Degree programme where either the Principal Supervisor and/or Co-supervisor do not meet the ~~required~~ criteria laid out above. In order to act as a Mentoring Supervisor, it must be demonstrated that: he/she has the prerequisite experience within the discipline-area proposed; and that he/she meets all of the criteria for the approval of a Principal Supervisor.

Change of Supervisor

At any time during the period of the research changes may need to be made to the supervision allocation. The need for such changes may arise for a number of reasons including: retirement, illness and/or new or additional supervisors may need to be appointed. In most cases the student and original supervisor will be expected to work together to agree a suitable replacement and hand-over process. The Head of Faculty and the original supervisor should notify PRAB of any changes to the composition of the supervision team.

Joint Research Supervision at another HEIs

As part of the development of research activity at level 10; LYIT may sanction the co-supervision of a Research Degree student based at another HEI. Co-supervision must be approved by the relevant Head of Faculty/Department and PRAB. The LYIT supervisor will be allocated timetabled hours as per LYIT guidelines in instances where the joint supervision arrangement is part of a formal agreement between LYIT and another HEI.

Research Training

For each discipline-area the following elements will be integrated into the research degree programme:

- Accredited training as part of the LYIT Level 9 Certificate in Research Practice (for Level 9 students) and the Certificate in Research Practice and Professional Development (for Level 10 students).
- General and transferable skills training.
- Specialised training to develop a broad understanding of the relevant discipline-area and as dictated by the nature of the research being undertaken.
- Seminars to inform and to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of research findings, enabling peer review and quality assessment.

It is the responsibility of the relevant Head of Faculty/Department and the supervisory team to ensure that:

- Students registered for a Level 9 Degree by Research complete the LYIT Level 9 Certificate in Research Practice.
- Students registered for a Level 10 PhD programme complete the LYIT Level 9 Certificate in Research Practice and Professional Development (during the first 12/18months of their research); and an additional 10 credits in discipline specific modules.
- Students registered for a Level 10 Professional Doctorate complete the required 60 ECTS prescribed in the programme schedule (during Year 1 and 2).

It is the responsibility of the supervisors to support the student in respect of his/her research training and to work with PRAB and the relevant Faculty Review Boards in this regard. Establishing collaborative partnerships with other HEIs is important in helping deliver the breadth of research training required.

7.3.6 Roles and Responsibilities of the Research Student

The student is expected to take full responsibility for his/her studies and shall:

- Familiarise themselves during induction with LYIT rules and regulations governing postgraduate awards by research.
- Familiarise themselves with the Student Handbook and any relevant Faculty Polices.
- Agree in advance with their Head of Faculty and supervisors the programme of work (to include the aims, objectives and timeframe for the proposed programme).
- Work in partnership with their supervisors to carry out risk assessments.
- Work in partnership with their supervisors to ensure that their project meets the requirement for ethical approval.
- Participate in training assigned by the LYIT and/or their Supervisor(s)
- Engage in the Faculty led annual progress review process.
- Submit a thesis and provide notice of intention to submit for examination in line with procedures.
- Comply with Institute policies and regulations.
- As appropriate disseminate the results and outcomes of the research

Research Students and Teaching Duties

For postgraduate research students registered at LYIT, teaching (or any other employment) must not impede the successful completion of their studies and must not contravene any conditions made by their funding body. Full-time postgraduate research students must teach no more than 6 hours per week, per semester. Any proposed teaching must be approved by the Head of Faculty/Department. Teaching activity should be commensurate with the student's qualifications and experience. Details of the teaching duties must be reported to PRAB as part of the annual review process.

A research student should be self-motivated to work such hours as are necessary to achieve their objectives over the duration of their research programme. As a norm student workload is a minimum of 1500 hours per year, consistent with LYIT Marks and Standards (section 5.1.3). In cases where a student is funded, there may be additional obligations required by the funding agency in relation to meeting certain milestones that must be taken into consideration when working hours are agreed. In consultation with the supervisor(s) it is the student's responsibility to decide the appropriate working structure as early as possible in their programme so that a plan can be agreed. Students are expected to develop a professional approach by attending all meetings and other relevant activities that are advised by their supervisor and/or beneficial to their programme/research.

Student Selection

All applicants wishing to register for a research degree programme must undergo a formal interview process with the relevant Faculty. The interview should ascertain the applicant's suitability for carrying out the proposed research to the level required for the postgraduate award. Following a successful outcome to the pre-admission interview and the assessment of his/her submitted application documentation, the candidate is deemed eligible to register for the appropriate Research Degree programme.

A candidate applying for a studentship for a postgraduate Research Degree programme is normally recruited following public advertisement. Studentship availability is dependent on the successful outcome of an application for research funding to an internal or external funding authority. The process for the selection and recruitment of a candidate for a research studentship is managed by the Head of R&I in conjunction with the Head of Faculty.

Assessment of Qualifications

Procedures exist to determine whether applicants holding qualifications not placed on the NFQ or not from an Irish HEI (i.e. non-national degrees, professional or equivalent qualifications) have the knowledge, skill and competence required to successfully complete the proposed research degree programme within the time allowed. These procedures are consistent with international best practice.

The candidate must provide the Principal Supervisor with full details of their qualifications who then submits the documentation to the Faculty office. The Head of Faculty submits the application to PRAB for review. PRAB makes a recommendation to the Office the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar.

In considering an application PRAB will look for evidence of the candidate's ability and background knowledge in relation to the proposed research. Professional experience, publications, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment shall be taken into consideration.

An applicant wishing to be considered under this regulation must include in the application for registration the names of two suitable persons whom the Institute may consult concerning the candidate's academic attainment and fitness for research.

Language of Instruction for Thesis

Studies are normally conducted and the final thesis submitted through the medium of English or Irish as agreed between the postgraduate student and the Supervisor(s). The thesis and any other materials submitted may be presented in another language (as dictated by the balance of the subject matter), provided that prior written approval of the Supervisor(s) and the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar has been obtained. In this case an applicant must demonstrate their proficiency in the language (in line with the entry requirements).

An applicant who has not been educated through the medium of Irish or English to Leaving Certificate or equivalent must present a recognised qualification in the English language with a minimum score of 7.0 IELTS. Certain projects may require a higher level of proficiency in English and in such cases the Head of Faculty on recommendation from the Supervisor(s) may require the applicant to take part in a further oral and/or written examination to demonstrate the required level of proficiency for the project.

Changes to Mode of Study

In the event that a postgraduate student wishes to change their mode of study, from part-time to full-time or vice versa, it is essential that the Supervisor(s) be consulted about the implications and feasibility of this course of action and make an application through the Head of Faculty and to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar.

Absence from Studies

Level 9 Research programmes and Level 10 PhD programmes cover a full calendar year. Students can normally take leave of 25 days per annum (in addition to institute closures and bank holidays). All requests for extended periods of leave outside of annual leave require the approval of the Head of Faculty. Such requests must be made in writing outlining the reasons for the request. Where the extended leave has an impact on the proposed target date for submission of a thesis, this must be communicated by the Head of Faculty to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. However, the granting of leave of absence may have significant impact on the postgraduate educational programme. These will be assessed on an individual basis. Extended leave of absence may render the research programme untenable.

7.3.7 Ongoing Monitoring of Postgraduate Research Degrees

The renewal of registration for a Level 9 Research Degree; a Level 10 PhD programme; and Phase 2 of a Level 10 Professional Doctorate is dependent on a positive outcome to the Annual Research Progress Review process. All annual reviews should be conducted in line with Table 7.1 below. Progress reports must be submitted by the Head of Faculty to PRAB:

- Student (LYIT – Postgraduate Student Annual Report Form)
- Principal Supervisor (LYIT – Supervisor's Annual Report Form)
- Report from the Head of Faculty indicating the level of satisfaction with each student's progress together with a recommendation regarding continuing registration for the subsequent academic year.

Table 7.1 Research Progress Review Process

Review Stage	Full time	Part time
Initial Assessment (normally presentation based)	Within 5 months of first registration	Within ten months of first registration
Annual Report Process	9-12 Months intervals from Registration	9-12 Months intervals from Registration
Confirmation Assessment (Level 10 PhD only)	Between 18 and 24months of first registration	Between 30 and 36 months of first registration
Intention to Submit	Three months before proposed submission date	Three months before proposed submission date
Submission of thesis	Within 48 months (Level 10) or 24 months (Level 9) of first registration	Within 72 months (Leve 10) or 36 months (Level 9) of first registration

The Postgraduate Student Annual Report Form is submitted to the Head of Faculty and addresses the following elements:

- Agreed research plan with supervisors.
- Structured work schedule and compliance with the schedule.
- Level of satisfaction with supervision and general progress to date.
- Frequency of meetings with supervisors.
- Target date for submission of thesis.

Each Principal Supervisor (in conjunction with the Co-Supervisor(s) must complete and submit a Supervisors Annual Progress Report form to their Head of Faculty addressing:

- Agreed research plan with postgraduate student.
- Structured work schedule and compliance with schedule.
- Frequency of meetings with postgraduate student.
- Training in research skills and techniques required by the student.
- Summary of feedback received from the student to date.
- Any serious problems encountered with the research to date.
- Supervisor satisfaction with the general progress of the work to date.
- Target date for submission of thesis.
- Supervisor's recommendation for transfer to a higher or lower register.

Application to Transfer from the Level 9 to the Level 10 Register

An application to transfer from the Level 9 Research Register to the Level 10 Research Register should not be made earlier than one year after admission to the Level 9 Research register; and not later than one year before the expected date of completion of the proposed Level 10 award. A request for transfer can only be initiated following:

1. Completion of the Annual Faculty Progress Review (report and interview) in both Year 1 and Year 2 of the Level 9 programme.
2. A recommendation to transfer from Level 9 to Level 10 by the Internal and External reviewer.
3. Approval of the recommendation by the Head of Faculty and PRAB.
4. The completion of the QQI Application form for transfer to the Level 10 PhD Register by the student and supervisors.
5. Submission of the: application form; and the report from the Internal and External examiners, by the Head of Faculty, to the Office of the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar for submission to QQI for approval.

The outcome of the QQI approval process will be communicated to the Head of Faculty by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. As appropriate the Head of Faculty may add a mentoring supervisor who has successfully supervised to completion at Level 10.
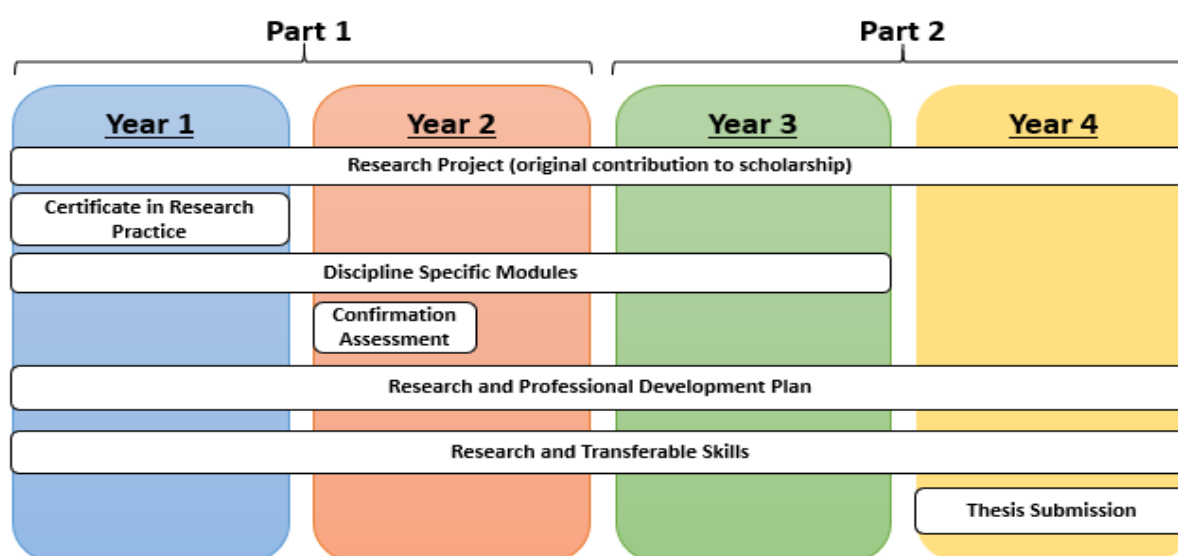
7.3.8   Ongoing Monitoring of Level 10 Degree programmes

7.3.8.1 Level 10 PhD programmes

At LYIT Level 10 PhD programmes comprise two parts as illustrated in figure 7.2:

Figure 7.2 Level 10 PhD Schedule

During Part 1 the student: defines their research plan; develops their research skills; and initiates original research work. In part 1 the student will normally complete a minimum of 30 ECTS of structured education and training.

Part 2 is primarily dedicated to completing thee research plan. In order to submit a thesis for examination the student must be fully registered (appropriate fees paid in full). A student registered on a Level 10 programme may not proceed to examination until they have accumulated the minimum required 30 ECTS by completing: the LYIT Certificate in Research Practice and Development (20 ECTS); and discipline specific modules (10 ECTS).

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2 of a level 10 programme, a student must undergo a confirmation assessment to establish that: they have made sufficient progress; and that they have the competence and capacity to complete the proposed research. Students that don't progress to part 2 can apply to transfer to the Masters Register.

The Confirmation Assessment Panel (CAP) is responsible for confirming the progress of the student from Part 1 to Part 2. The purpose of the CAP is to:

1. To provide an independent confirmation that the research question or area under investigation forms a valid subject for a Level 10 thesis.
2. To assess if the approaches taken are valid and likely to yield results and insights at a level commensurate with that of a Level 10 thesis.
3. To provide an evaluation of progress towards the goal of a Level 10 thesis and likelihood that the student will submit a Level 10 thesis within the normal time scale.
4. To provide independent advice on possible directions the research might take.

The Head of Research and Innovation will assist the Head of Faculty in convening the CAP. The CAP membership is as follows: two level 10 qualified, research active supervisors (one from a different Faculty to the student) and an external expert (who will act as chairperson). The principal supervisor and any co-supervisors cannot be members of the CAP. The CAP will normally be convened in either early September or early April (to facilitate timely reporting to PRAB). The CAP reports their decision to Head of Faculty who notifies PRAB. The Head of Research and Innovation will notify the Supervisors and students of the CAP date and associated process. The lead supervisor will liaise with the Head of Research and Innovation and the Head of Faculty to ensure that the student is adequately prepared for the CAP.

PhD Progress Report

The supervisors will submit a:

- Progress Report: a short statement (max one page) on the progress of the student within Part 1 and a recommendation on their progression to Part 2.

The student will submit a confirmation report (of circa 8000 words) including but not limited to the following:

1. Statement of Progress: abstract; impact statement; ethical considerations; and a synopsis of the work undertaken so far (max one page).

2. Research Plan: a timeline/ Gantt chart.
3. Evidence of successful completion of taught modules and training.
4. Written work to include: drafts of introduction, methodology and literature review.
5. A prepared presentation (which will be given to the CAP).

The confirmation assessment will take place no earlier than 12 months after the date of registration, and no later than 18 months after the date of registration for full-time students. The chairperson of the CAP is responsible for completing the Part 1 CAP report (using the Confirmation Assessment Report form). The final CAP report is sent to the Head of Faculty and to PRAB.

The CAP will make one of the following four recommendations to the Head of Faculty:

1. Proposed research and progress suitable for candidate to advance to Part 2 of Level 10 PhD programme.
2. Proposed research and/or progress not suitable, remedial action and report and present within 6 months (indicate month/year: _____).
3. Proposed research and/or progress is unsatisfactory and the student should apply for transfer to the Level 9 Register.
4. Recommend that the student's registration be terminated.

A student who wishes to appeal a decision of the CAP may do so through the procedures for a formal assessment appeal as outlined in Chapter 5 section 5.8 of the QAH.

7.3.8.2 Level 10 Professional Doctorate

At LYIT Level 10 Professional Doctorates comprise two Phases s as illustrated in figure 7.3

Figure 7.3 Level 10 Professional Doctorate Schedule
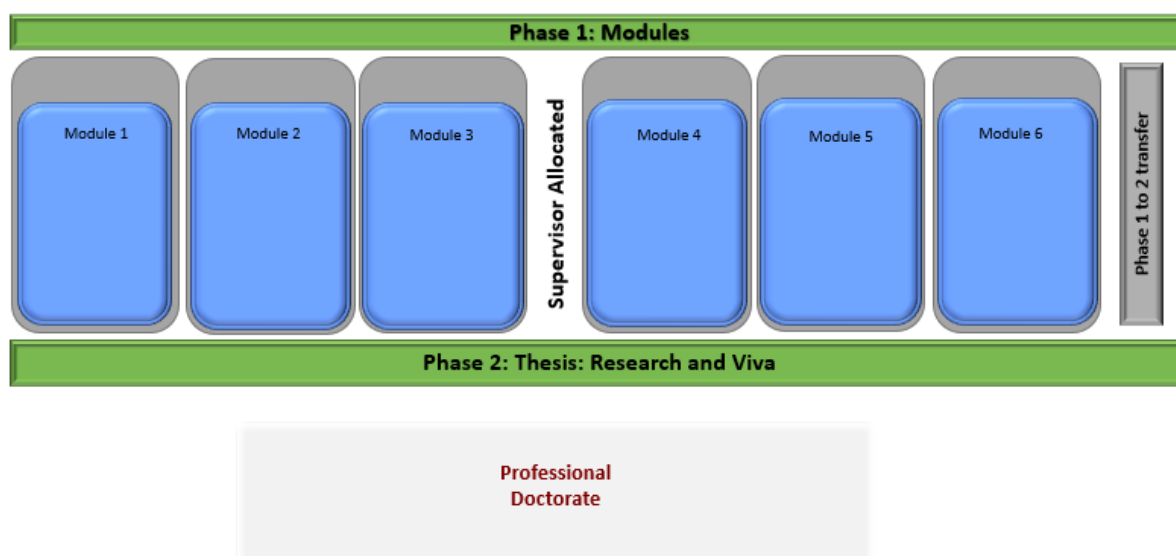
During Phase 1 (Year 1 and 2) the candidate: defines their research plan; develops their research skills; and initiates original research work. In phase 1 the student will complete 60 ECTS of structured education and training.

During Phase 2 (Year 3 and 4) the candidate completes their Level 10 research plan. In order to submit for examination, the candidate must be registered and have paid the appropriate fees in full. A candidate registered on the programme may not proceed to examination until:

- They have accumulated the required 60 ECTS.
- Achieved a PASS outcome in each of the 3 Research Papers.
- Produced a Thesis as per the prescribed structure and format (circa 45,000 words).

Year 1 and 2

In Year 1 and 2 Professional Doctorate candidates are subject to the LYIT's Quality Assurance procedures in regard to: Programme monitoring (QAH, Section 3.2); Access, Transfer and Progression procedures (QAH, section 4.3); and Marks and Standards (QAH, chapter 5).

The minimum mark required for a pass in any of the six modules shall be 50%. Professional Doctorate candidates are not eligible to: 1) pass by compensation; and 2) carry modules between Year 1 and 2.

Calculation of the award (PG Diploma) classifications is based on the Percentage Average with any classification higher than 'Pass' normally based on first attempt marks in the final stage of a programme.

After Year 1 and Year 2 the Internal and External Examiners shall meet together as a Examination Board. At the meeting of the Examination Board, a Broadsheet of Results shall be endorsed which shall record the total marks awarded to each learner in each Examination Module and which shall indicate, in relation to each learner's overall result, as to whether the learner has passed, or has passed with Merit (indicating the grade of Merit), or has passed with Distinction, or has passed with Honours (indicating the grade of Honours), or has failed. A full list of Award classifications is presented in section 5.6.

A candidate having completed the PG Dip will be eligible to transfer to a Level 9 Masters Award for which they will be required to submit a 30 credit research dissertation.

Year 3 and 4

The renewal of registration for a Professional Doctorate candidate in Phase 2 (Year 4) is dependent on a positive outcome to the Annual Research Progress Review. The annual reviews will be conducted at the end of Year 3. Progress reports must be submitted by the Head of Faculty to PRAB:

- Student (LYIT – Postgraduate Student Annual Report Form)
- Principal Supervisor (LYIT – Supervisor's Annual Report Form)
- Report from the Head of Faculty indicating the level of satisfaction with each student's progress together with a recommendation regarding continuing registration for the subsequent academic year.

The Postgraduate Student Annual Report Form submitted to the Head of Faculty addresses the following headings:

- Agreed research plan with supervisors.
- Structured work schedule and compliance with schedule.
- Level of satisfaction with supervision and general progress to date.
- Frequency of meetings with supervisors.
- Target date for submission of thesis.

The Principal Supervisor (in conjunction with the Co-Supervisor(s)) must complete and submit a Supervisors Annual Progress Report form to their Head of Faculty addressing:

- Agreed research plan with postgraduate student.
- Structured work schedule and compliance with schedule.
- Frequency of meetings with postgraduate student.
- Training in research skills and techniques required by the student.
- Summary of feedback received from the student to date.
- Any serious problems encountered with the research to date.
- Supervisor satisfaction with the general progress of the work to date.
- Target date for submission of thesis.
- Supervisor's recommendation for transfer to a higher or lower register.

Application to Transfer from the Level 10 PhD register to the Level 9 register

Students on the Level 10 PhD register, who are unable to complete the approved programme within the permitted duration may through the sponsoring Faculty, apply to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar for permission to transfer to the Masters Register. The VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar may permit such a transfer if satisfied that there are good reasons for doing so, and submit this request to QQI to have the registration amended. The attachment of special conditions, including provisions with regard to duration, to the candidate's registration for the Degree of Masters may be required at the request of PRAB/or QQI as required. The outcome of the QQI amendment process will be communicated to the student, the principal supervisor and Head of Faculty by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar.

7.4   The Examination Process

7.4.1   Examination Procedures for a Masters Research Degree

The candidate's research must be examined by two Examiners: an External Examiner, and an Internal Examiner (who is not the candidate's Supervisor). The arrangements for the candidate's examination shall be made by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The student's thesis submission will be referred by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar to the Examiners, who will also provide the Examiners with a copy of the examination procedures and criteria for the proposed award. The examination must be conducted rigorously, fairly and reliably and should only be undertaken by individuals with relevant qualifications and experience. For all candidates presenting for Level 9 Research Degree, the Examiners are required to assess the candidate using the thesis as evidence and satisfy themselves that the candidate has attained the standard. To recommend the award the Examiners must be convinced that the candidate has attained the standard for the award.

Following examination of the work, the Examiners should return the copy of the submitted work together with a report on their assessment and observations; and make one of the following recommendations:

- Recommended.
- Recommended with minor revisions.
- Not recommended but referred for major revision and re-examination.
- Not recommended.

The option to refer the thesis for revisions is only available the first time the thesis is examined. The Chairperson is required to prepare a summary report to LYIT. The report should include a brief outline of how the learning outcomes were achieved by the student, the names of each of the Examiners along with an outline of the assessment (the reports of the Examiners may be attached) and a report of the consensus recommendation. Recommendations should be presented by the Chairperson of Examiners to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. A Level 9 Degree by Research: is of honours standard and is awarded without classification. In the case of successful candidates, the Broadsheet of Results should be annotated "Recommended" and signed by the Examiners concerned.

7.4.2   Examination Procedures for a Level 10 Degree

For all candidates presenting for a Level 10 award the Examiners are required to assess the candidate by thesis and viva voce/oral and satisfy themselves that the candidate has attained the standard for the award. The candidate and Supervisor(s) must note that under no circumstances can they attempt to contact the Examiners during the period of the examination. The student's thesis submission will be referred by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar to the Examiners. The Examiners will also be provided with a copy of the examination procedures and criteria for the proposed award.

QQI will be invited to nominate a chairperson of Examiners at the request of the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar at the time of notice of the intention to submit the thesis. The Chairperson's role is to:

- Communicate with the Examiners to achieve consensus among them.
- Ensure the implementation of procedures which are fair and consistent for the purpose of compliance with standards determined by QQI.
- Report on the outcome of the examination through the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar to QQI.

Examiners are normally expected to carry out their duties within six weeks of referral to them of the work in question. A viva voce examination is a mandatory requirement for a Level 10 award. The viva voce examination will normally take place as soon as possible, or within three months of submission of the work presented. It will normally be conducted in English except by agreement with the Supervisor(s), the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar and the Examiners. The Examiners for the viva voce examination should consist of the Internal and External Examiners. It should be chaired by the appointed Chairperson of Examiners. The Supervisor(s) will normally be in attendance but cannot take part in the examination of the candidate's work. The purpose of a viva voce examination is to assess the work submitted by the candidate. It gives the candidate the opportunity to present and defend the work through high-level debate with experts. It enables the Examiners to confirm that the candidate has a thorough understanding of the practical and theoretical aspects and methods involved in the work.

The Chairperson's primary duty is to ensure that the Examiners and the student have adequate time for discussion of issues arising from the work submitted. As a matter of practicality, the chairperson should assume responsibility for the organisation of the examination on the day. However, where the appointed Chairperson is not a member of the Institute, this should be carried out by the relevant Head of Faculty or his/her nominee. This includes determining whether the candidate has any special requirements for the examination such as booking a neutral room (not the supervisor's, Chairperson's, or candidate's office). Before the examination itself, the chairperson should ensure that the external and the internal Examiners have had the opportunity to confer. The chairperson should agree the approach and broad lines of questioning with the Examiners, allowing the External Examiner the major say in the framing of these. It is particularly important that the Examiners identify areas of particular interest in advance, in order to ensure that these are adequately explored in the dialogue with the candidate. The Chairperson should introduce the Examiners to the student, briefly explain the purpose of the examination and the procedures to be followed, and advise the student to deal with questions as fully as he/she thinks necessary. The Chairperson's overall aim should be to ensure a fair and constructive dialogue between the Examiners and the student.

Following examination of the work, the Examiners should return the copy of the submitted work together with a report on their assessment and observations; and make one of the following recommendations:

- Recommended.
- Recommended with minor revisions.
- Not recommended but referred for major revision and re-examination.
- Not recommended.

The option to refer the thesis for revision is only available the first time the thesis is examined. The Chairperson is required to prepare a summary report to QQI on the relevant form. The report should include a brief outline of how the learning outcomes were achieved by the student, the names of each of the Examiners along with an outline of the assessment (the reports of the Examiners may be attached) and a report of the consensus recommendation. Recommendations should be presented by the Chairperson of Examiners to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The report is sent to QQI as soon as possible after the assessment by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. A Level 10 research degree is awarded without classification. In the case of successful candidates, the Broadsheet of Results should be annotated "Recommended" and signed by the Examiner(s) concerned.

- Where the examiners recommend that the Level 10 award be conditional on minor revisions being made to the thesis, the principal supervisor is responsible for monitoring the implementation of these revisions. The internal examiner(s) is responsible for ensuring that the changes made satisfy the requirements of the examiners. The internal examiner(s) shall communicate in writing to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar's Office that the revisions have been made. The timeline for the resubmission of a thesis requiring minor revisions is up to two months.
- Where the examiners have recommended that the Level 10 award be conditional on major revisions being made to the thesis, the principal supervisor is responsible for monitoring the implementation of these revisions. The internal examiner(s) in consultation with the external examiner, is responsible for ensuring that the changes made satisfy the requirements of the examiners. The internal examiner(s) shall communicate in writing to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar's Office that the revisions have been made. The timeline for the re-submission of the thesis requiring major revisions is normally six months. In exceptional circumstances the examiners may recommend an extension of up to an additional six months.
- If the outcome of the examination is "Not recommended", the examiners may, if appropriate, recommend that the student may reformat and resubmit the research for consideration for the award of Masters by Research; the student will also receive a transcript for any taught modules completed during the programme.

7.4.3 Criteria for the Appointment of External Examiners

The External Examiner(s), nominated in accordance with the agreed procedure, will be substantially independent of the Institute and shall not have acted as the candidate's internal or off-campus supervisor.

The External Examiner must be:

a. An academic or recognised expert from outside academia.
b. Currently active in research.
c. Have recognised expertise in the general area of the thesis or cognate area.
d. Have a qualification at least to the level of the award being sought by the postgraduate student or higher.
e. Have experience of successfully supervising postgraduate students to awards of the level of the award being sought, or higher
f. Have experience as a postgraduate research examiner, at the appropriate level, for a recognised university or institution.

Through a process of informal contact, the Supervisor(s) should ascertain the willingness of the nominee to act in this capacity, as well as their availability within an approximate six-week period after the intended submission date of the thesis.

7.4.4 Criteria for the Appointment of Internal Examiners

A member of the lecturing staff of the Institute, independent of the research project and unrelated to the supervisor(s) or the postgraduate student, is nominated in accordance with the agreed procedures. The Internal Examiner must not be involved in the supervision of the learner. The internal examiner must be:

a. An academic member of the staff of the Institute
b. Have knowledge and research experience in the general discipline of the thesis
c. Have a degree at the level of the award being sought or higher.

The Internal Examiner should have successfully supervised research students at least to the level of the award being sought by the candidate. Where this cannot be facilitated internally within the Faculty or Institute, a further Examiner must be appointed from outside the Institute to fulfil the duties normally assigned to the Internal Examiner. The supervisor(s) should ascertain the willingness of the nominee to act in this capacity, as well as their availability within an approximate six-week period after the intended submission date of the thesis.

Where the candidate is a member of staff of LYIT, an Internal Examiner will not be appointed from within LYIT Instead, a further External Examiner must be appointed from outside of LYIT to fulfil the duties normally assigned to the Internal Examiner.

7.4.5 Duties of Research Degree Examiners

The duties of Examiners for Research Degree candidates are as follows:

- To review the thesis or published papers submitted together with performance recordings where appropriate. Examiners should feel free to prepare independent preliminary observations on the submission if they so wish.
- To attend the viva voce examination for all Level 10 candidates.
- To attend any other assessment event where the Chairperson of the Examination Board deems necessary.
- To judge with fellow Examiner(s) whether the thesis contains sufficient evidence of systematic study and, for a Level 10 degree, makes an original contribution to knowledge either by the discovery of new facts or by the exercise of independent critical power, and for a Level 9 research degree, is either a record of original work or a critical exposition of existing knowledge. In this way to judge whether the required academic standards have been achieved,
- To make a recommendation in agreement with fellow Examiner(s) in relation to the outcome of the examination.

7.4.6   Submission (Word count)

In order to submit a thesis for examination the candidate must be fully registered (appropriate fees paid in full) on the appropriate postgraduate register of the Institute.

1. For a Level 9 Research Award the thesis should not exceed 40,000 words (excluding references and appendices); but normally including the: tables of contents, figures/illustrations/tables; footnotes.
2. For a Level 10 PhD Award the thesis should not exceed 80,000 words (excluding references and appendices); but normally including the: tables of contents, figures/illustrations/tables; footnotes.
3. For a Level 10 Professional Doctorate Award the thesis should not exceed 40,000 words (excluding references and appendices); but normally including the: tables of contents, figures/illustrations/tables; footnotes.

Initially, the candidate should present the thesis in soft binding to facilitate any subsequent revisions that may be required. For the initial submission, the candidate must prepare two copies of the thesis for distribution by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar to the Internal and External Examiners. In the case of a thesis, which is accompanied by an exhibit or artefact produced or developed by the candidate, which forms a significant part of the submission, it is the Head of Faculty responsibility to arrange appropriate and convenient access to the exhibit or artefact for the purpose of assessment by the examiners. The artefact should remain at LYIT (either with the Supervisors or in the library) following completion of the examination process. The thesis should normally be submitted for examination at least two months in advance of the Institute's Examination Board Meetings. Information on the dates of these meetings is published by the Office of the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar.

7.4.7   The Examination Board Meeting

The Examination Board meeting should then take place within the Faculty in accordance with LYIT procedures. The outcome of the examination along with details of the graduation ceremony is notified to the candidate by the relevant Head of Faculty. On receipt of confirmation of this positive outcome the candidate must make a minimum of three hard bound copies of the thesis. They should submit one copy to the Supervisor(s), one to the sponsoring Head of Faculty, and two to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar for submission to the library. Where there is disagreement amongst the Examiners, the Chairperson is expected to clarify and, where possible, reconcile those differences. In the exceptional case of irreconcilable disagreement, each Examiner shall submit a separate report to the Chairperson, who will then refer the case to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar (and QQI for consideration for a Level 10).

7.4.8   Appeals against the outcome of the Examination Process

A student may appeal their examination result to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The written appeal request must specify the grounds on which the review is sought and must contain all the information which the student requires to have considered in the review. The grounds for review of an examination result are as follows:

1. The examination regulations have not been properly implemented.
2. The regulations do not adequately cover the student's case.
3. Compassionate or medical circumstances (made known to appropriate Head of Faculty or to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar) relating to the student's examination situation of which the Examiners were unaware, prior to or during the examination process.
4. Significant performance related information which the appellant believes was not considered by the Examiners.

Such an appeal can be made in relation to the examination process only. Any complaint about other matters such as inadequate supervision must have been raised during the research and long before submission of the thesis. Appeal requests must be received by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar not later than ten working days after the candidate received notification of the examination result and the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar will first consider whether there is a case for a review of the examination result. If it is considered that the request is clearly frivolous, vexatious or outside the permitted grounds, the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar will discuss the request with the President. If it is agreed that there is no case, it is referred to the Institute Postgraduate Research Advisory Board for a decision. The Board may support the recommendation or require further investigation or action on the review, including seeking advice from QQI on the matter. There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Board. If it is considered that there is a case for a review the Head of Faculty will gather such evidence as is considered appropriate and likely to assist a panel in reviewing the case. This may include seeking written or oral testimony from the examiners, from other persons present at the oral examination, from supervisors or other members of the academic staff, or further evidence or statements by way of elucidation from the student.

The appeal shall be considered by an appeal panel constituted by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar in accordance with standard Institute procedures. It must include persons who have experience of supervising and examining research degrees and who have had no previous involvement in the case. If the appeal panel decides that a candidate has valid grounds for a review, it shall recommend that the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar (QQI at level 10) either: 1) invite the Examiners to reconsider their decision; 2) appoint new Examiners

7.4.9 Breaches of Assessment Regulations

Candidates and Supervisor should review Chapter 5 section 5.7 Breaches of Assessment Regulations; and specifically, to 5.7.2 LYIT's Plagiarism Policy. Where a substantive case of academic dishonesty or plagiarism is suspected by an Examiner, a written report of these allegations shall first be made to the Chair of the Examination Board. The Board will make one of the following recommendations in writing to the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar:

- The Examiners is satisfied that the matter should be noted but requires no further action by the Board because it involves no more than a single lapse or a very few minor lapses which have been considered in the Examiner's assessment of the work.
- The nature of the academic dishonesty is such that it is appropriate to investigate the matter further as per LYIT's procedures (please refer to section 5.7).

The outcome of the investigation in this regard will be communicated to the student by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar, who will also notify the Board's decision to the Principal Supervisor and the relevant Head of Faculty. Appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the agreed Institute procedures (please refer to section 5.8).

7.5 Research Ethics Policies and Procedures

LYIT's Research Ethics Policy and Procedures are intended to address the requirement for ethical clearance of all research undertaken within the Institute. The policy and procedures are primarily designed for postgraduate research but will also apply in the case of undergraduate research where ethical clearance is required.

7.5.1 The Faculty Research Ethics Committees (SREC)

The Head of Faculty in each of the Institute's Faculties will form a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). Research Degree students (Research Masters and PhDs) should submit applications for ethical approval to the Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC). All other students are required to make an application for ethical approval to the relevant SREC. Students should complete the application form for ethical approval and submit it together with any proposed questionnaires, list of questions or consent forms that will form part of the research. Staff who are supervising students undertaking research must ensure that learners are aware of the Institute's Research Ethics Policy and Procedures. As required the supervisor can seek guidance from the SREC. In the case of collaborative research projects, or research projects which have already been granted ethical approval by another recognised Higher Education Institution, the Institute reserves the right to refer any such proposals to the appropriate SREC(s) for consideration. Where the research involves interaction with young people or vulnerable groups then Garda clearance is also required. Guidance on applying for Garda clearance can be obtained from the Institute's Garda Vetting Officer.

Each SREC will comprise a minimum of the following:
- Head of Faculty (Chair).
- Research active member of academic staff from the Faculty.
- Research active member of academic staff from another Faculty within LYIT.
- Postgraduate Research student.

The SREC will aim to ensure that the proposed research is congruent with ethical considerations identified in the LYIT's ethics policy. Having considered the application, the SREC may then:
- Grant ethical approval and authorise the research to proceed without requiring any amendment. Any such authorisation is granted on the basis of the project as stated on the research submission; any changes must be notified to (and approved by) the Committee.
- Seek additional information, if necessary through a formal meeting of the Committee with the Research Student and the Research Supervisor(s).
- Seek modifications and a resubmission of the application.
- Withhold approval until all conditions set by the Committee have been met and all recommendations set by the Committee have been addressed.
- Refer the application on to the Institute Research Ethics Committee for further consideration.

In all instances the FREC will give reasons in writing for its decision. The FREC will normally reach decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be obtained then the majority decision will apply. Each Faculty will maintain a register of the ethics applications and decisions and a record of all applications

and decisions will be sent to the Institute Research Ethics Committee. The decision of the FREC may be appealed to the Institute Research Ethics Committee.

7.5.2   The Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC)

The IREC will oversee good practice in ethical research and work to develop the Institute's ethics policies and procedures and relevant forms. It will also:

- Hear appeals to decisions made by the SREC.
- Provide guidance as required to the SREC.
- Provide ethical approval for Research Degree students (Research Masters and PhDs).
- Provide ethical approval as necessary to staff who are conducting postgraduate studies at another institution.
- Provide ethical approval as necessary for externally funded research.

The VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar will assist the Heads of Faculty in the establishment of the IREC. The term of office of the IREC will be three years, to coincide with the term of Academic Council. The composition of the IREC will, at a minimum, be as follows:

- VP for Research, Equality and External Affairs/Head of Research and Innovation (Chairperson).
- Chair of Academic Council Research Committee (vice-chairperson).
- A postgraduate research student.
- A research active member of academic staff from each of the 3 Faculty.
- An External Expert.

The Committee will appoint a secretary from within the membership of the committee. The Committee will normally reach decision by consensus. If consensus cannot be obtained then the majority decision will apply with the Chair having the casting vote. Having considered all the material submitted the IREC may:

- Grant ethical approval and authorise the research to proceed without requiring any amendment. Any such authorisation is granted on the basis of the project as stated on the research submission; any changes must be notified to (and approved by) the IREC;
- Seek additional information, if necessary through a formal meeting of the Committee with the research student and research supervisor(s) (though this will be the exception rather than the rule);
- Ask for modifications and a resubmission of the application;
- Withhold approval until all conditions set by the Committee have been met and all recommendations set by the Committee have been addressed.

In all instances, the Committee will give reasons in writing for its decision. The Office of the VP for Research, Equality and External Affairs will maintain a register of the IREC's ethics applications and decisions.

Figure 7.3 The Process of Ethical Approval

7.5.3   Data Collection, Ownership and Retention

Research data comprises all recorded, descriptive, numerical or visual material collected as part of a research project/degree. Research Data may include physical records, electronic records, and digital images. Research data may be augmented by objects, specimens and samples. The Principal Researcher and/or the researcher supervisor(s) is the custodian of the research data and is responsible for: 1) securing ethical approval to collect data; and 2) the management of data, including security, storage and retention. The Principal Investigator and/or researcher/supervisor must:

1. Determine and control access rights to research data (subject to Data Protection and GDPR).
2. Establish if it is necessary to archive the collected data for the purposes of making it available for future use.

All research activity at LYIT involves securing ethical approval (please refer to section 7.6.1/7.6.2) External researchers (who are not registered students or members of staff at LYIT) who wish to carry out research at LYIT are required to obtain ethical approval from the Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC). As a norm applications will not be accepted from commercial research companies and/or undergraduate applicants. The application for an ethical review should be made (using the Research Ethics form) and submitted to the Head of Research and Innovation. The IREC may ask the applicants to attend in person as part of the application process. All subsequent communications arising from external applications will be managed by the Research and Innovation Office.

7.6   Research Projects and Centres

7.6.1   The Research environment at LYIT

Research is multifaceted and can vary from individual academics to projects within a large, multidisciplinary team, often involving collaboration with other HEIs or industry, either nationally, or internationally. LYIT's research focus is on four themes which have regional and national relevance and impact. LYIT's Strategy for Research and Innovation identifies 4 themes: 1) Connected Personalised Health and Well-being; 2) Sensors Technology and Data Security; 3) Tourism and Marine Resources; 4) Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The creation and maintenance of a sustainable research environment is central to our research activities. LYIT will continue to enhance research resources and infrastructure including laboratory equipment, and information systems. The institute will identify and develop training in research methods and create a coherent development process for researchers at all stages in their career from research student to principal investigator. The institute will explore opportunities to collaborate with other HEIs where such collaboration will enable involvement in research themes that require large scale as well as interdisciplinary collaboration. We will also partner with other HEIs to build academic clusters in selected research areas. LYIT will facilitate academic units in releasing staff and accessing resources required to develop research. Recruitment of Research Staff attached to funded Research Centres will conform with LYIT's HR Policies and Procedures. Recruitment of Postgraduate Research Students will be managed by the relevant Head of Faculty and will be via public advertisement. LYIT has invested in the provision of dedicated research infrastructure and facilities through the academic Faculty, Library, Research and Innovation Office and CoLab.

LYIT will adopt the Technological University Quality Framework (TUQF) Model for the development of Research Units and researchers. Therefore, all new (and existing) Research Centres will need to:

- Possess the required critical mass of researchers in a relevant research area prioritised by the Institute.
- Be aligned with the research priorities of one of the Institute's Faculties.
- Possess a proven track record in research dissemination and attainment of research funding from national/international funding schemes.
- Provide evidence of how research activities will impact on undergraduate and postgraduate education within a Faculty and the work of CoLab.
- Provide evidence on how the research activities will generate peer-reviewed publications; citations; and additional funding.
- Establish links with other HEIs, with an emphasis on partners in the West/North West cluster; the Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA); and in Northern Ireland.

Research administration at LYIT is managed through the Research and Innovation Office and supported by: the Head of Research and Innovation; and a Faculty Based Approach. In addition, an independent committee of Academic Council (the Research Committee), exists to make recommendations to Academic Council and the Governing Body on policy and programmes for research. The research supervisor(s); the postgraduate student; and the research active staff (the research team) are responsible for the day-to day conduct of the research, management of budgets and reporting on progress and outcomes. Where a commercial partner is involved there should be a written, signed agreement between the researcher, the Institute, the funding body and the commercial enterprise defining:

- The requirements of the project.
- The legal entitlement over the outputs of the project.
- How the outputs of the project are defined, e.g. delivery of data report, software acceptance tests, etc. Support required by each party, e.g. equipment, access to premises, access to people, software tools, hardware tools, etc.
- Compliance with LYIT's Research Ethics Policy and Procedures.
- Compliance with LYIT's Intellectual Property Policy.

7.6.2   Staff Research

Research by staff can be classified as:

- ***Non-commercial staff research*** refers to any independent or collaborative research undertaken by staff for their own professional development. This type of research may be funded through public grant schemes or may be unfunded. It will generally result in publication of scholarly books (or chapters), articles in peer reviewed journals and/or papers presented at conferences. This type of research is considered valuable in terms of staff professional development and as a contribution to the research ethos of the Institute. Support from LYIT will be at the discretion of the HoF.

- ***Funded staff research*** refers to activities where LYIT enters into agreements with a commercial partner and/or other funding agencies to carry out commercial or contract research, either by the staff member, or by hiring research assistants. This type of research is considered valuable in terms of staff professional development and as a contribution to the research ethos of the Institute. In these instances contractual matters are the responsibility of the Research and Innovation Office and supports and allocation are made at the discretion of the HoF.

- ***Post-doctoral research fellowships*** are awarded as paid research contracts in order to encourage and facilitate exceptional researchers or individuals who want to pursue a career in research. In these instances contractual matters are the responsibility of the Human Resources Office.

7.6.3   The Review and Reporting of Research

Research activity at LYIT is reviewed and reported as follows:

1. VP for Research, Equality and External Affairs Annual Report (section 1.4).
2. The Head of Faculty Annual Report (section 1.4).
3. The Faculty Review Process (every 5 years).
4. Central Service Review Process (every 7 years).
5. Bi-annual review of Research Student Progress (section 7.2.9).
6. Annual Research Seminar(s).

Appendix 7.1 Postgraduate Research Forms

1. External Expert Report
2. Application for Registration of a Research Degree Programme
3. Record of Meeting between Research Student and Supervisor
4. Research Degree Student Annual Progress Report Form
5. Notice of Intention to Present for Examination for Postgraduate Research Degree
6. Internal / External Examiners Report Masters Degree (Research)/ Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
7. Response to Examiners Report
8. Application to Transfer to Doctoral Register.
9. Confirmation of Assessment Panel Report.

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