SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND CULTURES
SCOIL NA NUA-THEANGACHA, NA LITRÍOCHTAÍ AGUS NA GCULTÚR

Handbook for Research Postgraduate Students

Chinese Studies ⁞ French Studies ⁞ German Studies ⁞ Spanish & Latin-American Studies

Welcome to the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures (SMLLC) at Maynooth University (MU), the National University of Ireland Maynooth. We hope that you enjoy your postgraduate studies with us and that you find your time here both productive and stimulating.

This Handbook provides information about the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures and explains certain regulations and arrangements that affect you. The Handbook should be used in conjunction with the two publications issued by the Graduate Studies Office:

- the Ph.D. Research Student Supervisory Policy
- the MU Postgraduate Student Handbook (both available at mu.ie/graduate-studies)

This SMLLC Handbook for Research Postgraduate Students only contains additional information specific to the SMLLC.

Research Postgraduate Students are students registered for an MLitt or a Ph.D, both full-time or part-time. The SMLLC offers Ph.D programmes in Chinese Studies, French Studies, German Studies and Spanish & Latin American Studies All modules on the Structured Ph.D are open to students registered for the MLitt. MLitt students are strongly encouraged to fulfill the requirements set down for the Structured Ph.D in case they want to continue their research at Ph.D level later.

SMLLC can offer personal supervision and teaching by experts in a wide variety of fields, innovative area of research and a lively intellectual environment. Research ranges from literature to intercultural studies and second language acquisition, from film to translation, from history to visual culture. From the Middle Ages to the very present, all periods are covered by members of staff within SMLLC.

Details of individual staff members' expertise, their publications and their current projects can be found in the Research area of the SMLLC website. Please note that staff are mostly willing to supervise projects that lie outside their own specific research specialisms. Ask the Head of School or

the Subject Leaders / Postgraduate Coordinators of the subjects to direct you to the most suitable staff member. In general, research is organized around the following thematic research clusters:

- Cultural Representations of Motherhood
- Applied Linguistics & Intercultural Studies
- Cultures of Migration
- 20th and 21st Century Literary and Film Studies
- Cultural Representations of Conflict/Memory Studies
- Representations of Gender

(Projects outside these areas may also accepted for supervision.)

Any research student's primary relationship is with his or her supervisor. Joint supervision across the disciplines within SMLLC and with colleagues in other schools, departments or institutes is possible. Research students are encouraged to participate in the activities of the School by attending guest lectures and readings, and above all by attending the SMLLC Research Seminar series (Wednesdays 1 pm, SMLLC Seminar Room). Even listening to presentations on topics not related to your own research can provide valuable experience. The Research Seminar is also the primary forum to present your own research to an interested and knowledgeable audience.

The postgraduate programmes offered by the School aim to help you to develop your understanding and appreciation of important concepts in the literatures and cultures of Europe and the wider world, to enhance your analytical, creative and reflective skills, and to cultivate your love of other cultures. The aim of embarking on a major research project at post-MA level is not only to demonstrate one's own understanding of the chosen field of investigation, but also to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge in this field. This includes demonstrating where the thesis breaks new ground by locating the investigation and argument in the overall context of existing (published) research and scholarship.

To enter a postgraduate programme is to commit oneself to certain standards of professional behaviour. These include regular and punctual attendance at all time tabled sessions and supervisory appointments, and punctual presentation of all assignments. They also include a methodical approach to the citation of sources in all written work and adherence to the style conventions of the relevant sub-discipline.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material in this handbook, neither the school nor the university can be bound by any error or omission, and we reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary.

SMLLC Contact Information

All administrative offices of SMLLC are located in the Arts Building, North Campus, Maynooth University. The administrative offices are in rooms 35, 36, 37 and 66. The SMLLC staff offices are also located in the Arts Building, but some are located in Callan Building (see language websites).

Websites:

- mu.ie/smllc
- mu.ie/chinese
- mu.ie/french
- mu.ie/german
- mu.ie/spanish

Research Environment

As a postgraduate student in the SMLLC, you will enhance your understanding and knowledge of the various languages, literatures and cultures taught in the School, enhance your research, linguistic, and other transferable skills, carry out research in your chosen area of specialization under the supervision of an expert in the field, meet established academics in the field of languages, literatures and cultures, become part of a specialist group of scholars and participate in research seminars, workshops and conferences.

Research students, particularly those in receipt of a John and Pat Hume Scholarships, funding from the IRC, the NUI, or other academic bodies, should apply to An Foras Feasa (www.forasfeasa.ie) for work space in the Iontas Building (foras.reasa@mu.ie). SMLLC will attempt to provide shared office facilities and access to computers to all research postgraduate students who also have teaching duties in any of SMLLC's language units. Shared office facilities will be located in the School Ph.D Hub.

Supervision of Thesis

A supervisor is appointed by the University for every MLitt and Ph.D student on the nomination of the Head of School. The student and supervisor will agree on a schedule of research and writing. This will be documented on the Initial Meeting Record Form. The number, duration and frequency of meetings between student and supervisor will be determined by the supervisor.

The exchange between supervisor and research student is one of the defining characteristics of university life. Every supervisor learns from his/her research students; and the supervisor is always keen to encourage original discoveries and insights on the student's part. The supervisor, on the basis of knowledge and experience, will provide perspective, direction and information, but the

initiative in researching and writing a thesis must come from the student. It is the duty of the supervisor to warn the student if he/she is making mistakes or failing to produce work to the required scholarly standard. However, the production of a thesis of the necessary quality is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Any change in the scope or emphasis of a thesis should be negotiated with the supervisor.

Supervisors will read and advise on individual chapters and/or oral presentations by the student. The frequency of this core supervisory activity is agreed between supervisor and student. However, it is imperative that a complete final draft of every thesis (including the preliminary pages and the bibliography) should be submitted to the supervisor in every case. A Ph.D thesis will not be accepted for examination by the university until both the supervisor and the Head of School have first signed a formal statement to the effect that it is ready for examination. (This does not commit the supervisor, or the Head of School to an assertion that the thesis merits the award of the degree.)

Students should not depend on the availability of their supervisors for consultation in July or August, unless this has been specifically arranged. In case of any dispute arising between a student and his or her supervisor, either party may raise the matter – informally in the first instance – with the Head of School. If the Head of School is also the supervisor, the subject leader of the relevant language unit should be informed of the problems. Beyond that, the normal grievance procedures pertaining in MU will be activated.

Annual report and progression

Every MLitt and Ph.D student is required to complete the *Initial Meeting Record Form* at the beginning of their research and the *Annual Progress Review Form* to report on the year's work and to set out future plans. These forms are forwarded to the supervisor who adds his/her comments and then passes them on to the Head of School. Copies of the forms are available from the supervisor, the Graduate Studies website and from the SMLLC Administration Office.

Please note that the return of the *Annual Progress Review Form* is an obligation, even if the student proposes to submit a thesis in the summer or autumn of that year. For others it is a university prerequisite for continuing registration in the following academic year. Please also note that funding agencies (IRC, NUI, Hume) operate their own reporting regimes which mostly requires the supervisor's confirmation of adequate progress.

Where a prospective Ph.D. candidate has registered initially as a MLitt student, satisfactory progress may lead to a change of registration from MLitt to Ph.D. Progress considered to be unsatisfactory may lead to a recommendation to change registration from Ph.D to MLitt or to discontinue studies at the University.

Please consult the Maynooth University Ph.D Research Student Supervisory Policy:

Programme Structure (Structured Ph.D)

The normal prerequisite for admission to the Structured Ph.D programme is an MA or MLitt in the relevant subject area. Students with such a qualification are required to take structured Ph.D modules to the value of 30 ECTS credits. Students admitted without an MA, MLitt or equivalent are required to take structured Ph.D modules to the value of 60 ECTS credits. Students may, in consultation with their supervisor, take extra modules beyond this requirement.

The Structured Ph.D consists of two parts:

Major Thesis:

The thesis is based on original research conducted by students under the direction of an academic supervisor. The option of jointly-supervised research with another school, department or research institute (e.g. An Foras Feasa) is also available. For further information, please consult the university website [Postgraduate Studies](#) area.

Any thesis must adhere to the conventions of the discipline in which it is written. This concerns structure and argument, the register (clarity and correctness) of the analytical language, but also the style of referencing and bibliography. The various disciplines and sub-disciplines represented in SMLLC all have certain conventions and requirements regarding thesis style. A comprehensive guide that contains information on all aspects of the formal presentation of theses, including referencing and bibliography, is issued by the Modern Humanities Research Association. This MHRA Style Guide is widely regarded as normative for academic form and style in English-speaking Europe; it is downloadable free of charge at mhra.org.uk.

The School does not prescribe the length of the thesis. However, a MLitt thesis that falls below 120 pages or 35000 words, a Ph.D thesis that falls below 250 pages or 75000 words (both including footnote references and bibliography, but excluding appendices, statistics, reproduction of sources, etc.) might be regarded as too light to deserve the award of the respective degree. The supervisor is the ultimate authority on length, style, structure, bibliography, referencing and related issues.

Student Research Module Options (including modules available outside of your main research discipline):
- Graduate Skills Modules,
- Subject-Specific Research Modules,
- Modules available outside the Home Department,
- Inter-University and External Modules,
- Flexibly defined Modules

The structured Ph.D and Research Masters programmes at Maynooth University are designed to meet the needs of the professional researcher and of an employment market that is wider than academia, through the introduction of a range of educational and training opportunities as part of

the programme. All structured research programmes are supported by formally accredited subject specific modules and transferable modules.

The structured research doctorate is supported by a number of taught modules to be taken over the course of the programme designed to enhance research excellence and professional training.

The student, in consultation with their supervisor, will devise a plan with a specified number of modules taken each year of the programme. In the duration of the programme, 30 ECTS credits must be passed as the minimum requirement (15 ECTS in Graduate Skills and/or Outside the Home Department Modules and 15 ECTS in Subject-Specific or Inter-University/External Modules). The maximum ECTS credits that can be taken is 90 ECTS credits. Students normally take any given module only once over the course of the Ph.D programme. The same piece of work can only be submitted and accredited once (see table below). For a list of available modules, please click here.

Students are normally required to take the faculty-wide Graduate Skills Modules over the first three years of the programme. Allowances will be made for specific circumstances such as prolonged periods spent abroad or equivalent. Prolonged research periods abroad might offer the opportunity to take External Specialist Modules at the host university. Ph.D students based at a foreign university will be advised by their supervisor to take relevant modules or attend relevant seminars, etc. Such modules will be awarded the ECTS value stipulated by the host university. Prolonged research periods abroad may also be considered as an Internship. The mark(s) achieved at the host university will be translated into the MU scheme of "Pass" and "Did Not Complete".
Students are normally required to take one (but normally not more than one) of the ID84X modules (that's the SMLLC Research Seminar identified as ID841, ID842 or ID843 depending on the year of registration for the degree) during the first three years of their Ph.D programme. ID81X modules are offered in irregular intervals, but at least every third year so that every student has the chance to take an ID81X module over the course of their programme; specific topics will vary (determined by area of research of a given cohort). Every student is normally required to take one ID 81X module during the four years of their Ph.D programme.

Students are encouraged to take suitable modules, including suitable modules offered by cognate departments / schools / research institutes within Maynooth University. Students also have the opportunity to take suitable modules from relevant MA programmes if they have not already done so. All students normally have to pass at least one Advanced Specialist module.

Module Code	Module Title
A minimum of 15 credits from the following Generic Skills and Transferable Skills modules:	
GST1	Personal Development and Employability
GST2	Finding Information for your Research
GST3	Academic Writing
GST4	Research Practice and Integrity
GST5	Creative Thinking and Problem Solving
GST6	Social Entrepreneurship: Making a Real Difference

GST8	Grant Management & Compliance
GST10	Innovation & Research Commercialisation
GSS3	Professional Skills: Thesis Completion and Career Development
GST13	Research Funding Application
CTL1	Professional Certificate in Postgraduate Teaching & Learning: Tutors & Demonstrators
A minimum of 15 credits from the following Flexibly Defined Modules:	
ID84X	SMLLC Research Colloquium*
FR/GN/SPA 85X	Summer or Winter School / External Short Course / Master Class**
FR/GN/SPA 86X	Conference: Attendance & Presentation**
SPA 87X	Inter-institutional / International Seminar**
SPA 88X	Internship**
SPA 89X	Language for Academic Purposes
ID 81X	Issues and Strategies in Contemporary Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures**
	Transferable Modules (from other Schools, Departments or Centres)

*Attendance at Research Seminars is strongly recommended. Credit will be awarded on the basis of the presentation of a paper on the student's own research or a response paper / summary of another speaker's presentation.

** Assessment and award of mark will be determined on an individual basis, appropriate to the event. If external organisers award certificates or credit, the result will be translated into the MU categories of "pass" or "did not complete"; if external organisers do not issue certificates, other forms of assessment (e.g. project report) will be required.

Supervisors will make their students aware of any external opportunities (conferences, workshops, etc), but students should also inform themselves of conferences and courses, for example by subscribing to relevant mailing lists.

There are also flexibly defined modules on offer which are assessed by the Supervisor. These are:

Flexibly Defined Modules:
Modules Assessed by Supervisor

1. Conference Organisation
2. Work Based Placement
3. Research Placement
4. Engaging with the community: research, practice and reflection
5. Scientific Outreach and Communication
6. Advanced Communication Skills (Conference Presentation)

7. Advanced Communication Skills (Publication)

8. Seminar Series

9. Winter/Summer School/Short Courses

The Viva Voce Examination

Once the thesis is submitted, the university will appoint examiners for the Ph.D, one internal (normally from the department or subject in question) and one external expert in the field. An independent chair is also appointed who invites the student once a date for the viva has been set. The student will also be asked if he/she would like his/her supervisor to be present at the viva. Vivas would normally concentrate on the thesis, especially issues arising out of the research, but may also touch on topics from related fields. The examiners issue a recommendation; if the recommendation is that certain corrections and amendments have to be undertaken by the student, it is the role of the internal examiner to verify that these were indeed carried out before the final version can be submitted and the degree can be awarded. No new viva is necessary in these circumstances. Other recommendations include acceptance of thesis without any corrections and rejection of thesis.

More information relating to the examination by Viva Voce can be found at [Academic Policies and Procedures | Maynooth University](#).

Services, Supports and further Information:

The Library: As a research postgraduate student, you will be given some basic training in research skills as you embark on postgraduate study. This might include a workshop with your subject librarian, which will show you how to access the many useful resources available in the library. SMLLC offers support to research postgraduates to cover the cost of interlibrary loans (up to 10 per student per year).

As a postgraduate student, you will have access to the National Library of Ireland (http://www.nli.ie/en/readers-tickets.aspx) and other university libraries in the Dublin area. You can get the application forms for SCONUL and ALCID cards from the [Maynooth University Library](#). These will allow you to access other libraries in Ireland and the UK. The Russell Library in St Patrick's College holds historical materials that may be of interest to research students. Access to the [Russell Library](#) is by appointment only.

An Foras Feasa: SMLLC has strong links with An Foras Feasa: The Institute for Research in Irish Historical & Cultural Traditions (www.forasfeasa.ie). Research postgraduate students of SMLLC can avail of the facilities of and are encouraged to participate in events organized by An Foras Feasa.

Conference Support: Supervisors will make their research students aware of any external funding possibilities both as regards scholarships for the MLitt/Ph.D as a whole and for special initiatives

(travel grants, conference subsidies, bursaries for archive visits, etc.). The most important sources of postgraduate funding are IRCHSS scholarships, NUI studentships and the John and Pat Hume scholarships awarded by Maynooth University. Supervisors will assist students with their applications.

The individual subjects within SMLLC might offer limited financial support to Research Postgraduate Students to facilitate attendance of conferences, workshops and masterclasses. Such assistance must be authorized by the Head of School. Further information about possible funding opportunities is available at the Graduate Studies webpage.

Graduate Studies Office: The Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies is responsible for the overall affairs of the postgraduate community; this includes generic skills modules, welfare, internal scholarships, etc. You are strongly advised to look at the Graduate Studies Office website. It contains information on the governance of and regulations for postgraduate degree programmes as well as information about: The Graduate Feedback Council; The Postgraduate Researchers' Forum; The Postgraduate Society.

Health and Safety: The commitment and cooperation of all staff and students of the University is essential if safety, health and welfare are to be ensured. When entering a lecture theatre or classroom, students should note the nearest exit in case of emergency. In the interest of safety students are asked not to obstruct passageways with bags/books etc. in class rooms and lecture theatres. Please consult the Health and Safety web page for further information regarding fire assembly points, first aid etc.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism: Maynooth University is committed to equality in higher education, both within the University and within the higher education system as a whole in Ireland. It recognises that the obstacles to equality are complex and can include deep-rooted structural biases as well as formal barriers. It seeks to develop and implement policies and procedures which promote equality and which avoid unfair discrimination on grounds of age, disability, membership of the Traveller community, marital status, family status, gender, religion, social class, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

Maynooth University is committed to being a University community that promotes and advances equality, respects and values diversity, and develops a collegiate environment of *excellence with equality*, in which the human rights, the responsibilities and diversity of all students and staff are recognised and respected.

The University values the enrichment that comes from a diverse community of students and staff and seeks to promote equality and prevent discrimination in the access, experience, progression and achievement of all students and staff through developing and implementing clear policies, processes, practices providing effective support to help realise equality in student experience and in employment.

The Office of the Vice President for Equality and Diversity has been developed therefore, to realise the University's core values of equality, inclusiveness, social justice, dignity and respect, and to fulfil its obligations in these areas. The Office of the Vice President for Equality and Diversity will ensure that Maynooth University meets its obligations as an equal opportunities employer and public service provider.

The University EDI policies are available at [EDI Policies | Maynooth University](#).

Guidelines on Intellectual Property Rights: All students and staff at Maynooth University are subject to the Intellectual Property Policy, and therefore should familiarise themselves with it.

Postgraduate Researchers are expected to work to the same ethical standards as other academics within their department and the University. All research projects must have ethical approval. In some cases the project may need to be considered by the University's Ethics Committee. For further information, please consult the [University Research Policies](#).

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is intolerable at all levels of academic life and scholarly activity. Please consult the following [MU Policy on Plagiarism](#).

The European Doctorate
Ph.D students who have a strong European Language element to their research can apply for a European Doctorate. For further information, please consult the appropriate area of the [Graduate Studies Policies webpage](#).