Thesis Presentation Regulations – October 2015
School of Postgraduate Studies

Students who fail to follow these instructions for their thesis will be asked to re-submit correctly presented versions before processing for examination (soft bound copies) or graduation (hard bound copy plus the electronic copy).

1. Introduction

These regulations have been created for all higher degree by research theses submitted to the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) for examination through the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) for an RCSI/NUI award. Candidates should NOT follow regulations from any other institution or any earlier versions of RCSI Thesis Presentation Guidelines because these may no longer be acceptable for thesis presentation. These regulations have been developed in the interests of ensuring that all higher degrees by research at RCSI are of the highest quality. The final approved version of each thesis is made available as a hard bound copy through the RCSI library and as an electronic copy through the RCSI Institutional Repository, except where an appropriate embargo of up to 24 months is in place.

Candidates who have questions about thesis presentation that are not answered within these regulations are advised to contact the School of Postgraduate Studies for clarification. They should do this in sufficient time before submitting their thesis for examination or graduation. Candidates should be aware that a thesis containing large numbers of typographical errors and/or other poorly presented work may result in a thesis being returned without full examination.

2. General

The following information is provided to take account of the definition of each higher degree by research (see Thesis Regulations for PhD, MD, MCh or MSc as appropriate).

2.1   All RCSI theses are written in UK English. If there are specific arrangements in a joint award with another international institution, candidates must take responsibility for familiarising themselves with any additional language requirements e.g. writing the abstract in English and in a second language.

2.2   A thesis must be well presented and must demonstrate the originality of the research, the candidate's knowledge of the field and evidence of critical judgement. The thesis must be written clearly, concisely and must follow standard scientific arrangement.

2.3   Scientific misconduct, such as fraud or plagiarism, is completely unacceptable. Students should refer to the Plagiarism Policy which is available on Moodle.

2.4   The thesis represents a permanent record of work carried out to answer a scientific question or questions and should be written by the student who completed the work. The student may receive appropriate editorial assistance, usually from their supervisor(s), but the writing style should be that of the student.

2.5   A student may include in their thesis, as appendices, published or submitted manuscripts, papers or reports on which s/he is author or co-author provided they have obtained appropriate copyright permission to do so. The student is expected to have made a substantial contribution to any such manuscripts and where s/he is a co-author, the student's contribution should be indicated clearly. Any such manuscript(s) should relate to the topic of the thesis.

2.6   The regulations that follow are designed to ensure that the thesis is a complete, legible, well organised scientific record of the work.

2.7   Thesis by publication is not available at RCSI.

2.8   Word limits have been set for higher degree by research and a thesis must not exceed the word limit set. The normal length of a PhD thesis or MD thesis is 80,000 to 100,000 words and of an MCh or MSc thesis is 50,000 to 60,000. In all cases the word count excludes tables, figures and appendices. See Thesis Examination Regulations www.rcsi.ie/ThesisExamination

2.9   Students must ensure that they recognize appropriately and/or acknowledge the work of others using proper citation and referencing etiquette. In addition to published work, this requirement includes the work completed by others who were temporarily assisting with the project, for example students who completed summer or other elective research periods in the research group. See Appendix 1, Candidate Thesis Declaration, for details.

3. Directions on Format and Presentation

3.1   Text
3.1.1   Text type must be printed on good quality A4 (210mm x 297mm) white paper.
3.1.2   Black.
3.1.3   Left aligned.
3.1.4   Size 12 sans serif font, such as Arial. Do not use a serif font, such as Times New Roman.
3.1.5   One-and-a-half spaced.

3.2   Margins
3.2.1   Left-hand margin of 40 mm to allow sufficient space at the binding edge; other margins must not be less than 15 mm.

3.3   Pagination
3.3.1   Number all pages within a thesis beginning with the title page.
3.3.2   Use Arabic numerals e.g. 1, 2, 3… throughout, beginning with the title page as page 1.
3.3.3   Display page numbers on all pages except the title page.
3.3.4   Number pages consecutively throughout the thesis, including preliminary pages, diagrams, figures and their legends, tables and their legends, appendices and references.
3.3.5   Do not use Roman numerals on any page number.
3.3.6   Locate page numbers centrally at the bottom of each page.
3.3.7   Use the same font type and size for page numbers as used in the text of the thesis.
3.3.8   If there is more than one volume of a thesis, use sequential page numbering in each volume. For example, volume 1: pages 1 – 250; volume 2: pages 251 – 500.

3.4   Tables
3.4.1   Place table titles and legends before the table.
3.4.2   Label tables with titles (related to the chapter number) and legends that are self- explanatory. A reader should not have to refer to the text to understand what the table claims to show.
3.4.3   Place each title and legend and its associated table on the same page, located appropriately relevant to the text.
3.4.4   Provide sufficient experimental detail in the legend, which immediately follows the title.
3.4.5   Ensure that each column in a table has a heading and, when necessary, define abbreviations in the legend.
3.4.6   Where a table requires more than one page, include column headings at the beginning of each page for that table.

3.5 Figures

3.5.1 Place figure legends after the figure.

3.5.2 Label each figure with a number (related to the chapter number), a title and a legend; the title and legend should be self-explanatory. A reader should not have to refer to the text to understand what the figure claims to show.

3.5.3 Place each figure and its associated legend on the same page, located appropriately relevant to the text.

3.5.4 Label the abscissa and ordinate clearly with appropriately sized type and give units of measurement.

3.5.5 Mark the scales for plotting the data with short index lines and note that you do not need to number every index line.

3.5.6 Use standard symbols found in MS Word and identify the symbols and curves in the legend rather than on the figure.

4. Arrangement of Thesis Content

Each thesis should contain the following elements in the order given:

4.1 A title page (see below for details); see Appendix 3, Example Title Page of Higher Degree by Research Thesis.

4.2 Candidate Thesis Declaration, see Appendix 1.

4.3 IP declaration (ONLY IN SOFT-BOUND THESIS, NOT IN HARD-BOUND THESIS); see Appendix 4.

4.3.1. If further protection of potential intellectual property is required, additional safeguards must be put in place in advance of thesis submission. In such instances, candidates and their supervisors are advised to seek guidance from colleagues in Technology Transfer at the RCSI Office of Research and Innovation.

4.4 A table of contents* immediately following the IP declaration.

4.5 A list of abbreviations.

4.6 A list of figures.

4.7 A list of tables.

4.8 A summary of not more than 300 words.

4.9 Acknowledgements, including any specific wording required by a funding agency, if relevant.

4.9.1. Acknowledgements include the supervisor(s) of the project; funding; RCSI; any other institution(s) in which part of the work was carried out, for example during a research placement.

4.9.2. Candidates usually acknowledge others in their research group who assisted them in their project.

4.10 Dedication; this is not essential but some candidates like to dedicate their thesis to someone who inspired them.

4.11 Introduction chapter – this includes a comprehensive literature review and statement of the hypothesis plus aims of the thesis.

4.12 Materials and Methods – descriptions must be in sufficient detail such that someone else can conduct the experiments or research based on the detail provided.

4.13   Results chapters – the number of results chapters varies according to the level of the degree and the type of research carried out.

4.14   General discussion chapter

4.15   References – see section 6

4.16   Appendices – include pre-prints or authorised copies of papers published from the thesis.

*If there is more than one volume, the Table of Contents in the first volume must include complete contents for all volumes of the thesis. Subsequent volumes must include a Table of Contents giving the contents of that volume only. The final word count must be included at the bottom of the Table of Contents page.

5. Thesis Submission

All printed copy thesis submissions are to the School of Postgraduate Studies, RCSI, 123 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. An electronic copy of the approved thesis is submitted to the RCSI Institutional Repository after the examination process is completed. In advance of submitting their thesis candidates must make an appointment via postgraduateschool@rcsi.ie tel: +353 (0)1 402 8594 to ensure that a member of staff is available to accept the submission. Candidates should be aware that a thesis may be rejected if it does not meet the requirements for submission.

5.1 Candidates must submit three identical, printed, soft bound paper copies of their thesis plus a single completed *Examination Entry Form*.

5.2 When requested to do so after completion of the examination process, candidates submit one electronic and one hard bound copy of the examiner approved version of their thesis plus a single completed *Copyright and Thesis Distribution Request*. This final copy must incorporate any changes required by the examiners. If an electronic copy of the thesis or a hard bound copy is submitted before the examination is complete, i.e. before appropriate examiner approval is provided, the thesis will <u>not</u> be accepted and conferring of the degree may be delayed. See appendix 2, Submitting a Thesis to the RCSI Institutional Repository.

5.3 Any publications arising from the work in the thesis must be submitted to the RCSI Institutional Repository.

5.4 All copies of a submitted thesis must include a Candidate Thesis Declaration <u>signed</u> by the candidate. It is not acceptable for anyone else to sign this declaration.

5.5 If a candidate cannot submit their thesis in person, they must ensure that their submission is clearly addressed and an explanatory note included with the submission.

5.6 The paper and binding covers of all thesis submissions must be size A4 (210mm x 297mm). Printing must be single sided in all copies of a submitted thesis.

5.7 It is unusual for theses to be submitted in more than one volume and candidates are strongly recommended to submit single volume theses. Learning to write concisely is part of higher degree by research training and examiners prefer to examine a concisely written thesis. If the inclusion of essential supplemental material with the text of the thesis warrants printing more than one volume, consideration may be given to including this material in an alternative format. In such cases, candidates should consult the School of Postgraduate Studies well in advance of submission deadlines.

6. References

The thesis must include a complete list of the references cited within it. Two standard formats for citing references in Biomedical Sciences exist: Harvard and Vancouver. Students should use a reference manager system, for example, EndNote. Check the Information Seeking and Library Skills area of Moodle for details http://vle.rcsi.ie/course/view.php?id=154

6.1 Check with your supervisor regarding which referencing system is most appropriate for your field of research.

6.2 Ensure that every reference cited in the thesis is listed appropriately in the list of references.

6.3 Ensure that there are no extra references in the list, i.e. every reference in the list should be cited within the text of the thesis.

7. Binding, Covers and Title

7.1 **Soft Bound Copies**: three soft bound copies in temporary soft binding: with an acetate front cover and soft plain card for the rear cover. The title page should be visible through the front cover. Identical binding must be used for all three copies.

7.2 **Hard Bound Copies**: one hard bound copy. The thesis must be bound between boards, colour RCSI Maroon Pantone 208. The binding will be of a fixed kind in which leaves are permanently secured. The boards will have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing on a shelf. On the spine in gold lettering include the forename and surname; degree for which award has been approved and year in which examiner approval was received; see Appendix 5, Example Spine Title of Higher Degree by Research Thesis. On the front cover in gold lettering, include the forename and surname, title of the thesis, degree for which award has been approved, year in which examiner approval was received. The name given in the thesis must be as approved at initial registration*. The forename should be given in full, other forenames, where available, as initials and the surname in full.

7.3 **Cover Title**: The outside front board must bear the title of the work; it should be in at least 24 pt [8 mm] type and the lettering should be gold colour. The name and initials of the candidate, the qualification for which the work is submitted and the year of examination approval must also be shown. The cover material should not bear any design; see appendix 6, Example Cover Title of Higher Degree by Research Thesis.

7.4 **Spine Title**: The spine of the work will bear, in at least 24 pt [8 mm] type, the surname and initials of the candidate, the qualification for which the work is submitted and the year of examination approval. This information will normally be printed along the spine in such a way as to be readable when the volume is lying flat with the front cover uppermost. If the work consists of more than one volume, the spine will also bear the number of each volume. See appendix 5, Example Spine Cover of Higher Degree by Research Thesis.

* Candidates who have changed their name since initial registration and who wish to have their changed name included on their thesis must have provided appropriate evidence/ official documentation of this change. Acceptable evidence of a change of name includes a marriage certificate. Notification of any change of name must have been provided as soon as possible after the event and at least six months before graduation.

8. Title Page Specification

The title page of every volume will give the following information in the order listed:

8.1 The official, current RCSI logo.

8.2 The full title of the thesis, which must describe the content of the thesis accurately and concisely, i.e. do not use overly long thesis titles.

8.3 The total number of volumes, only if more than one volume, and the number of the particular volume.

    a. If there is more than one volume, each volume requires a title page which differs only in the volume number.

8.4 The full name of the author followed, if desired, by any qualifications and distinctions, without full stops. This name must match the name under which the candidate originally registered for the higher degree, which was verified at that time.*

8.5 The Department of the primary supervisor in which the work was carried out.

8.6 The Faculty and institution in which the thesis is presented, i.e. Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

8.7 The qualification for which the thesis is submitted. Note, do not include full stops in the qualification (PhD, MD, MCh, MSc).

8.8 The month and year of submission. Note that in some cases the time that elapses between a thesis being submitted and passed by the examiners may span more than one calendar year. In such cases, the hard bound copy of the thesis and the electronic copy should contain the year in which the examiners approved the final version of the thesis.

8.9 The name of the Supervisor(s) and Co-supervisors; these must be the official supervisors with whom the candidate registered for the higher degree and they must be listed in the correct order.

* Candidates who have changed their name since initial registration and who wish to have their changed name included on their thesis must have provided appropriate evidence/ official documentation of this change. Acceptable evidence of a change of name includes a marriage certificate. Notification of any change of name must have been provided as soon as possible after the event and at least six months before graduation.

9. Final Form of Thesis and Permission to Consult

Finality: A thesis submitted for examination must be in final form, i.e. supplemental work will not be considered by the examiners.

Permission to consult: RCSI is committed to open access of the results of its research. The thesis is listed in the catalogues and the hard bound thesis copy is made available for consultation. Unless an embargo is placed on an examined and approved thesis, it is made available through the RCSI Institutional Repository. An embargo can be placed on a thesis for up to 24 months.

Appendix 1 Candidate Thesis Declaration

I declare that this thesis, which I submit to RCSI for examination in consideration of the award of a higher degree <insert name of degree> is my own personal effort. Where any of the content presented is the result of input or data from a related collaborative research programme this is duly acknowledged in the text such that it is possible to ascertain how much of the work is my own. I have not already obtained a degree in RCSI or elsewhere on the basis of this work. Furthermore, I took reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and, to the best of my knowledge, does not breach copyright law, and has not been taken from other sources except where such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text.

Signed _____

Student Number _____

Date _____

Appendix 2 Submitting a Thesis to the RCSI Institutional Repository

Submission policies Before submitting material to the RCSI Institutional Repository, please read the submission policies on this web page http://epubs.rcsi.ie/policies.html

Uploading your thesis

1. If you have not already done so, create an account.
2. Go to the **e-publications@RCSI** website at http://epubs.rcsi.ie – click "Submit Research" in the right-hand menu. Scroll down to the Theses and Dissertations section and select the appropriate higher degree category.
3. In the self-submission of Scholarly Work to **e-publications@RCSI,** read the information and indicate that you agree to the terms by ticking the checkbox towards the end of the page.
4. In the next screen, which is the submissions form, enter the following information:
   a. Title – this is the approved title of your examined and corrected thesis
   b. Author and full name of organisation – this is your full name as author of the examined thesis and the organisation is Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Do NOT use the abbreviation RCSI.
   c. Date of award – this is the date of your graduation. Alternatively, you may use the date on which the School of Postgraduate Studies informed you that your thesis was approved by the examiners.
   d. Degree Type – select Thesis. Do NOT select Dissertation.
   e. Degree Name – this is either PhD, MD, MCh by Research or MSc by Research.
   f. First Supervisor – this is the official primary supervisor with whom you registered at RCSI for your higher degree by research.
   g. Second Supervisor – if you have a second supervisor, this is the official second named supervisor with whom you registered at RCSI for your higher degree by research.
   h. Third Supervisor – if you have a third supervisor, this is the official third named supervisor with whom you registered at RCSI for your higher degree by research.
   i. Funder/Sponsor – this is the name of your funding agency, if relevant, for example, HRB, HEA, SFI, etc.
   j. Keywords – add your own keywords (separate keywords or keyword phrases with commas).
   k. Subject Categories – select the subject category that best fits your thesis.
   l. Abstract – enter your approved abstract, which must be not more than 300 words.
   m. Link to this item at – this section is for RCSI Library staff only; please leave blank.
   n. Creative Commons Licence – this section is for RCSI Library staff only; please leave blank.
   o. File Size – indicate the size of the file to be uploaded.
   p. Comments – enter any comments you want to add or leave blank.
   q. Citation – please add citation in Vancouver bibliographic style (or leave blank and we will do so for you).
   r. Embargo Period – select either "No Embargo Required"; "1 Year"; "18 Months"; "2 Years". Do NOT select "3 Years".
   s. Upload file – choose your preferred option, e.g. "Upload file from your computer".
   t. Additional Files – note that your approved thesis should be in a single file format; therefore only tick this option if you have more than 1 file to add.
5. Click Submit – wait for the screen to tell you that the document has been submitted. You may also revise your submission or make another submission at this point.
6. Log out of your account – when you have completed your submission, please log out of the repository – go to "My Account" and click "Log Out".
7. Submission review
   RCSI Library staff will review your submission and will be in contact as soon as possible. For any queries, please contact **epubs@rcsi.ie**.

Appendix 3 Example Title Page of Higher Degree by Research Thesis

The role of genetics in susceptibility to cardiovascular disease during high risk activity

Patrick S. Brennan BSc MSc
Department of Cardiology
RCSI

A thesis submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, in fulfillment of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisor(s):   Professor A Earhart
Dr B Springstein

February 2015

Appendix 4 IP Declaration

[This should be included in the soft-bound thesis only. REMOVE FROM THE FINAL HARD-BOUND THESIS]

IP Declaration

The contents of the enclosed manuscript are confidential and should not be disclosed, or disseminated in any way, to any third party other than to staff or students of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland or an external examiner appointed for the purpose of reviewing the manuscript.

Appendix 5 Example Spine Title of Higher Degree by Research Thesis

Front Cover

PhD	Patrick S. Brennan	2015

Back Cover

Appendix 6 Example Cover Title of Higher Degree by Research Thesis

The Role of Genetics in Susceptibility to Cardiovascular Disease During High Risk Activity

Patrick S. Brennan

PhD   **2015**