



School of Engineering

PhD Researcher Subject Handbook
(Last updated October 2022)

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PhD Research Handbook

School of Engineering

FACULTY OF COMPUTING, ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

V8 January 2022



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1.0 Introduction to PhD Study in the School of Engineering

The School of Engineering at Ulster University boasts a strong research portfolio covering areas that include biomaterials, healthcare technologies, materials characterization, nanomaterials, photocatalysis, plasma physics, control electronics and advanced composite manufacturing. A healthy balance of theoretical and applied multidisciplinary activities facilitate successful research impacting highly important global challenge areas and in turn promoting healthy and sustainable futures for all citizens.

Engineering Research at Ulster is administered primarily within the School of Engineering which is based at the University's Jordanstown (Belfast) Campus. A further spoke of engineering research activity has been established in the North West of the province at the Magee campus (Derry/Londonderry) - activity at that campus is primarily affiliated with the School of Computing, Engineering and Intelligent Systems.

Engineering at Ulster brings together a 140 strong multi-disciplinary group of researchers (academic, contract researchers and PhD Researchers) from a range of disciplines to undertake various forms of advanced engineering research in a number of key challenge areas. This work is undertaken in two main divisions/centres, namely:

- Nanotechnology and Integrated Bioengineering Centre (NIBEC)
- Advanced Future Materials and Manufacturing (AFM2)

PhD Researchers form an integral part of the research environment within the School, currently there are over 60 PhD Researchers working alongside academics and Post-Doctoral Researchers.

1.1 Managing your PhD Journey

PhD Manager is the primary tool used by the Doctoral College, the School and both you and your Supervisors to manage all aspects of your PhD journey (<https://phdmanager.ulster.ac.uk>). There are a series of guides available on PhD Manager to help you learn to navigate around the system with detailed videos to show you how to conduct the majority of the tasks and processes required during your PhD study.

PhD Researchers will be assigned to a lead Supervisor (Chair of the Supervisory Team) and at least one joint Supervisor prior to registration. Supervisors will be experts in the field of the PhD. For interdisciplinary projects the Supervisory team may include Supervisors from other Faculties/Schools within the University. External Supervisors can also be assigned from other universities, companies or specialist partners (e.g. clinical collaborators) where appropriate. Supervisors will meet with PhD Researchers within the first week of study to discuss the research topic and develop a Research Plan for the 3 years (7 years part-time) of the PhD programme. PhD Researchers and Supervisors are required to meet regularly (at least once per month) to discuss progress throughout the course of study. PhD Manager should be used to schedule and record meeting notes from Supervision Meetings – with the PhD Researcher being responsible for scheduling meetings and preparing draft meeting notes for assessment and confirmation by the Supervisor.

In addition to the support provided by Supervisors, the School of Engineering provides administrative, academic and personal support throughout the course of your PhD study - details of primary contacts and useful links to information can be found within this guide. Information on the training provided by the Doctoral College and the School can be found within the training section of this guide.

1.2 Attendance

PhD Researchers within the School are expected to work full-time (35 to 40 hours a week) and will be based at one of the School's dedicated facilities (e.g. in NIBEC, NIACE, or other labs on either the Jordanstown or Magee campus). PhD Researchers are entitled to 26 days of annual leave per year plus University closure days. Working arrangements for Part-time PhD Researchers will be discussed and agreed prior to registration. Requests for, approval of and details relating to your annual leave allowance should be processed via PhD Manager.

1.3 Important Milestones

There are four major assessment milestones throughout the duration of study (3 years for full time, 7 years for part-time), described on the Doctoral College website: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctorscollege/current-phd-researchers/handbooks-and-policies/research-studies-handbook/the-phd-journey-key-milestones>. The first is the initial assessment which occurs around 3 months into the PhD (10 months for part-time). The second, the confirmation assessment, occurs 8-10 months into PhD study (16-20 months for part-time), with a third checkpoint (the final assessment) scheduled for month 30. PhD Researchers are expected to submit their PhD thesis at month 36 and begin preparation for the final element of assessment, the viva. Further details on the structure and content for each assessment can be found within the Assessments section of this guide.

Other important dates relate to:

- Re-enrolment, annually mid-September – online via the Ulster portal.
- Annual Report, to be completed by the first week in May each year – online via PhD Manager. This is your opportunity to report progress and provide feedback on your supervision and the research environment.
- Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), annually end of May – online via a unique link emailed from Doctoral College staff. PRES is the only UK higher education sector-wide survey to gain insight from postgraduate researchers about their learning and supervision experience. In the 2019 PRES the School of Engineering showed an overall satisfaction score of 82%.

1.4 Local Induction

During Welcome Week in mid-September, a local induction will be organised to introduce PhD Researchers to the School facilities, key staff and Supervisors. An overview of relevant University and School Policies will be provided. This Local Induction is complemented by a Doctoral College Induction, details of these arrangements are sent directly by the Doctoral College.

1.5 Disseminating Research Findings

During your PhD you will generate new knowledge - it is important that you share this with the research community via conference presentations, publications and through public and school's engagement events. Planning how you disseminate your research requires close collaboration with your Supervision Team. Learning how to develop research questions, design experiments, conduct data analysis and discuss findings is hugely important – your Supervisors will be able to provide guidance and help with this aspect of your PhD. Publishing your work permits the opportunity for peer-review and is an excellent way to demonstrate your research potential to future employers.

1.6 Help and Support

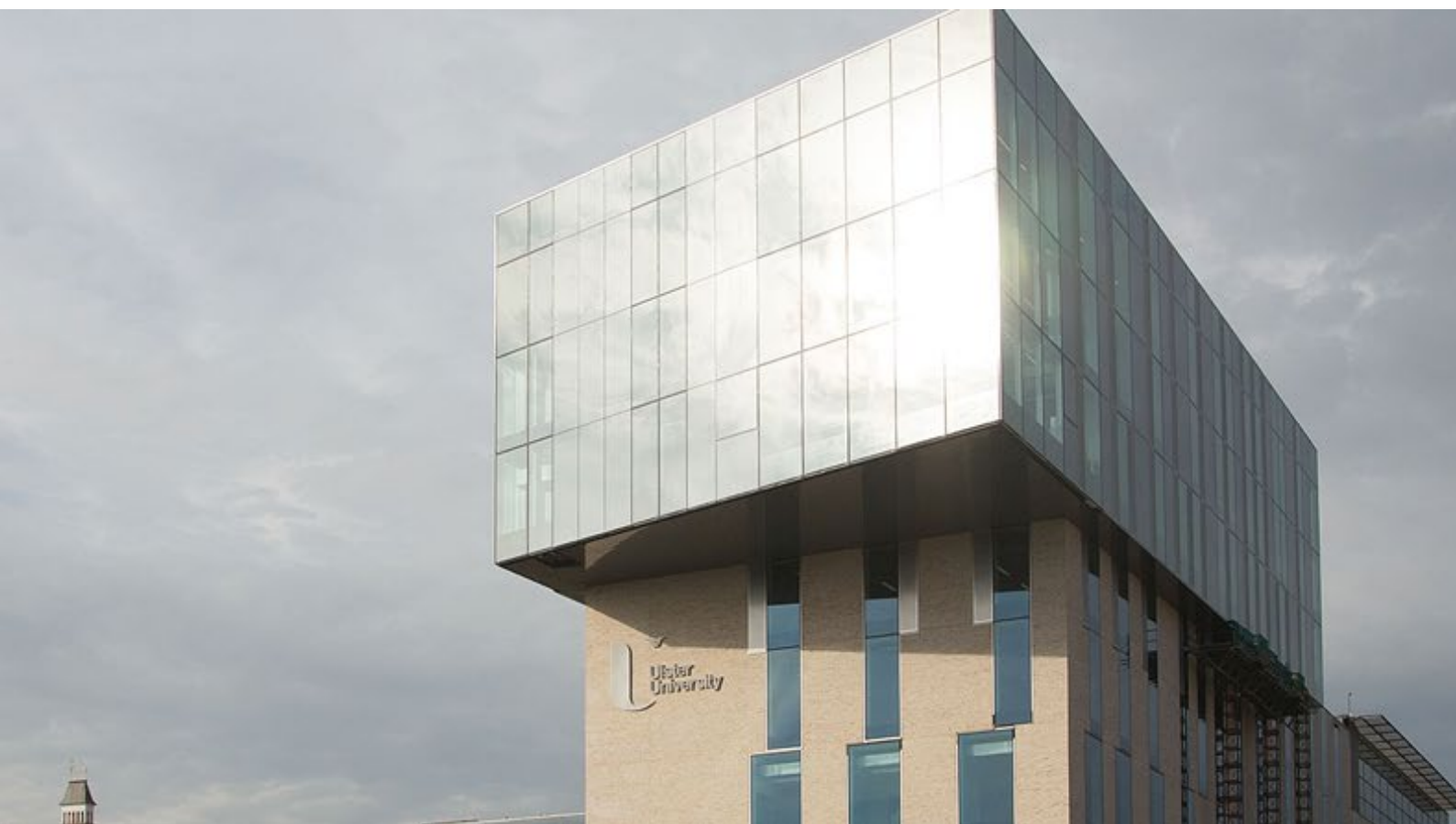
If you have questions related to the content of this handbook or any other aspect of the PhD process, please ask your Supervisor/s or those listed in the Contacts section of the Handbook – we are all happy to help.

Additional information regarding help with PhD budgets, travel, purchasing, changes during your PhD and support services can be found within the Additional Information section of this guide.

A detailed FAQ guide is also available on the Doctoral College website: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctorscollege/current-phd-researchers/faqs>

Central University Support is provided via Student Support <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/studentsupport>. This includes Health and Wellbeing (physical and mental health, academic support) and Money advice (dealing with debt and crisis funds available to all PhD Researchers who can evidence hardship). Feedback from PhD researchers who have accessed this support has been extremely positive.

PhD Forums take place regularly and are a great way to interact with your fellow researchers, to share news, ideas, techniques and support cross disciplinary projects. The PGT, RD and AEEA are often present and will relay any key information or good news stories. PhD Forums take place physically on campus or virtually on MS Teams, with invites shared to all PhD Researchers via email.



2.0 Contacts for PhD Researchers

Whilst your Supervisory team will be your primary contact, a number of key staff are on hand to help as described below:

Administrative contact for PhD Researchers:

Charly Mifsud (Academic Excellence Executive Assistant).

c.mifsud@ulster.ac.uk

+44 28 9036 6927

Room BC-04-303

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff/c-mifsud>

Charly's working hours are Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm and Friday 9am-4pm



Charly Mifsud is the Research Administrator within the School, please contact Charly for information related to travel/expenses, purchasing, assessments, change requests, PhD Manager system queries and any other administrative processes.

Administrative contact (NWCAM Project):

Tracey McCarron

t.mccarron@ulster.ac.uk

+44 28 9036 6128

Room BC-04-303

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff/t-mccarron>

Tracey's working hours are Wednesday 9am-12pm, Thursday 9am-5pm and Friday 9am-4pm

Tracey McCarron provides administrative support for Academics, Researchers and PhD Researchers working on the NWCAM Project. For PhD Researchers working on NWCAM please contact Tracey for information related to travel/expenses and purchasing.

Administrative contact (ECME Project):

Ann Blair

a.blair@ulster.ac.uk

+44 28 9036 8664

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff/a-blair>

Ann's working hours are Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm and Friday 9am-4pm

Ann Blair is the Project Officer for the ECME project. For PhD Researchers working on the ECME project please contact Ann Blair for information related to travel/expenses and purchasing.

Post-Graduate Tutor:

Dr Patrick Dunlop (Senior Lecturer)

psm.dunlop@ulster.ac.uk

+44 28 9036 8942

Room BC-04-215

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff/psm-dunlop>



Dr Patrick Dunlop is a Senior Lecturer and the Post-graduate tutor for the School. Dr Dunlop is responsible for supporting PhD Researchers with their studies and is the point of contact for academic support, personal support and support with assessments for both PhD Researchers and Supervisors. Contact Patrick directly by email if you wish to arrange a meeting.

Research Director:

Professor Dewar Finlay

d.finlay@ulster.ac.uk

+44 28 9036 6586

Room BC-04-216

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff/d-finlay>



Professor Dewar Finlay is the Research Director for the School of Engineering. Professor Finlay is responsible for the Research activities within the School, including oversight of PhD Researcher achievements and wellbeing. If there are any queries throughout your studies that cannot be resolved by your supervisors and/or the Post-Graduate tutor Professor Dewar Finlay is the next contact. To arrange a meeting please contact Charly Mifsud (details above).

Associate Dean (Research and Impact):

Professor Brian Meenan

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff/bj-meenan>

bj.meenan@ulster.ac.uk

+44 28 9036 8939

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff/bj-meenan>



Professor Brian Meenan is the Associate Dean (Research and Impact) for the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment. Professor Meenan has oversight of all Research activities within the Faculty including PhD Researchers.

3.0 Facilities and Training

NIBEC and NIACE contain a broad range of specialist facilities to support research. Please refer to the Useful Links section for a breakdown of the key pieces of equipment available within each centre. PhD Researchers and Supervisors will agree throughout the PhD on the most appropriate equipment for use during your project. Please note that for a small number of specialist systems, an introduction to the system may be provided and you will be assisted to run samples. Following completion of the Training Needs Assessment (TNA) on PhD Manager, a training development plan should be agreed with Supervisors early in the PhD – including both generic and specific training needs. You will be asked to confirm that the TNA has been completed at your Initial Assessment.

3.1 Local Training

PhD Researchers should arrange to be fully trained on necessary equipment and complete appropriate health and safety training, including risk and COSHH assessments before any equipment is used. The online equipment booking systems can be used to reserve time on the major items of equipment. Certificates will be issued once every six months for training on the main pieces of equipment in NIBEC (those on the central booking system). If the equipment hasn't been used during the last 6 months refresher training will be required. Local training procedures are in place in Block 6, NIACE and Magee through the associated technical staff. Specific training complements the Doctoral College Researcher Development Programme.

3.2 Doctoral College Based Training

The Doctoral College provides excellent training for your PhD through the Researcher Development Programme (RDP), details are available here: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/researcherdevelopment>. Sessions should be booked in advance via PhD Manager (Events/Workshops section), please ensure you attend or cancel in good time. If you have questions relating to the RDP please contact Lisa Thompson, l.thompson@ulster.ac.uk.

There are several mandatory courses, such as Research Integrity Training, which must be completed before submission of reports for the initial assessment – this is an online course on Blackboard. It's advised to complete this training as soon as possible after you start your PhD – the assessment panel will ask you to confirm completion of this mandatory training at your assessments. A wide range of generic training opportunities can be used to support your training development plan – soft-skills are highly regarded by employers; developing scientific writing and presentation skills will help you prepare for preparation of reports, conference presentations etc.; some excellent courses are available to help you prepare for your final viva.

Your Doctoral College training and development activity is recorded on PhD Manager and produces a Training Log, including downloadable certificates. This Training Log can also be updated with external activities, so that you have a comprehensive record of all your researcher development activity over the course of your PhD.

3.3 Teaching and Demonstrating

Many PhD Researchers help teach tutorials, act as lab demonstrators and occasionally undertake coursework assessment within the School. If you are interested in demonstrating, please discuss with your Supervisor in the first instance. Charly Mifsud will circulate forms to all PhD Researchers before the start of each semester asking for your availability for teaching and demonstrating, as agreed with your Supervisors, and you will be subsequently assigned hours as available. We cannot guarantee teaching opportunities for all PhD Researchers but will try to accommodate as many requests as possible.

Whilst most Scholarships prevent paid part-time working, PhD Researchers are permitted to conduct up to 6 hours per week of University demonstration. School Office staff will provide details of the payment process - the demonstrating rate, paperwork and claim deadlines etc. For queries regarding the payment and claim process please contact the School Office staff on seng@ulster.ac.uk.

You will need to undertake the one-day Introduction to Teaching and Learning for PG Teaching Assistants prior to being eligible for teaching – this course is available multiple times in the academic year and can be accessed via the Doctoral College Researcher Development Programme.



4.0 Assessments

4.1 Initial Assessment Guidelines

Purpose

After approximately 3-4 months (100 days) of full-time postgraduate study, or after 10 months in the case of part-time mode of attendance, it is expected that PhD Researchers will have developed a reasonable understanding of the area of research in which they are working and will have some initial ideas on the likely contribution to knowledge that it will make to the subject(s) concerned. The initial assessment seeks to ensure that this level of progress has been achieved.

The dates of the initial assessment will be notified to Postgraduate Researchers by Charly Mifsud, Academic Excellence Executive Assistant, School of Engineering.

Content

The assessment process comprises both a written and an oral element and addressing these requirements should be organised in close co-operation with the project Supervisors.

PhD Researchers are expected to give an oral presentation, using appropriate materials, e.g. PowerPoint, to an Assessment Panel including one or more of their Supervisors, a reviewer and a chairperson appointed by the Research Director.

The presentation will normally last 10 minutes and will then be followed by 10 minutes of questions. It should provide information on:

- Project background.
- Overall aim of the research.
- Objectives to be achieved within the first 10 months (full-time) or 20 months (part-time) and the activities that will be undertaken to achieve these objectives.
- Type of training and equipment required to advance the project.
- Gantt chart indicating plans over the next 9 months.

The associated written element should be presented as a concise Research Plan, in font Arial 12 with 1.5 line spacing not exceeding four A4 pages in length, excluding appendices and a Gantt chart (as presented in the oral element). Please note that the reviewers are not required to read beyond the four-page limit.

Assessment Criteria

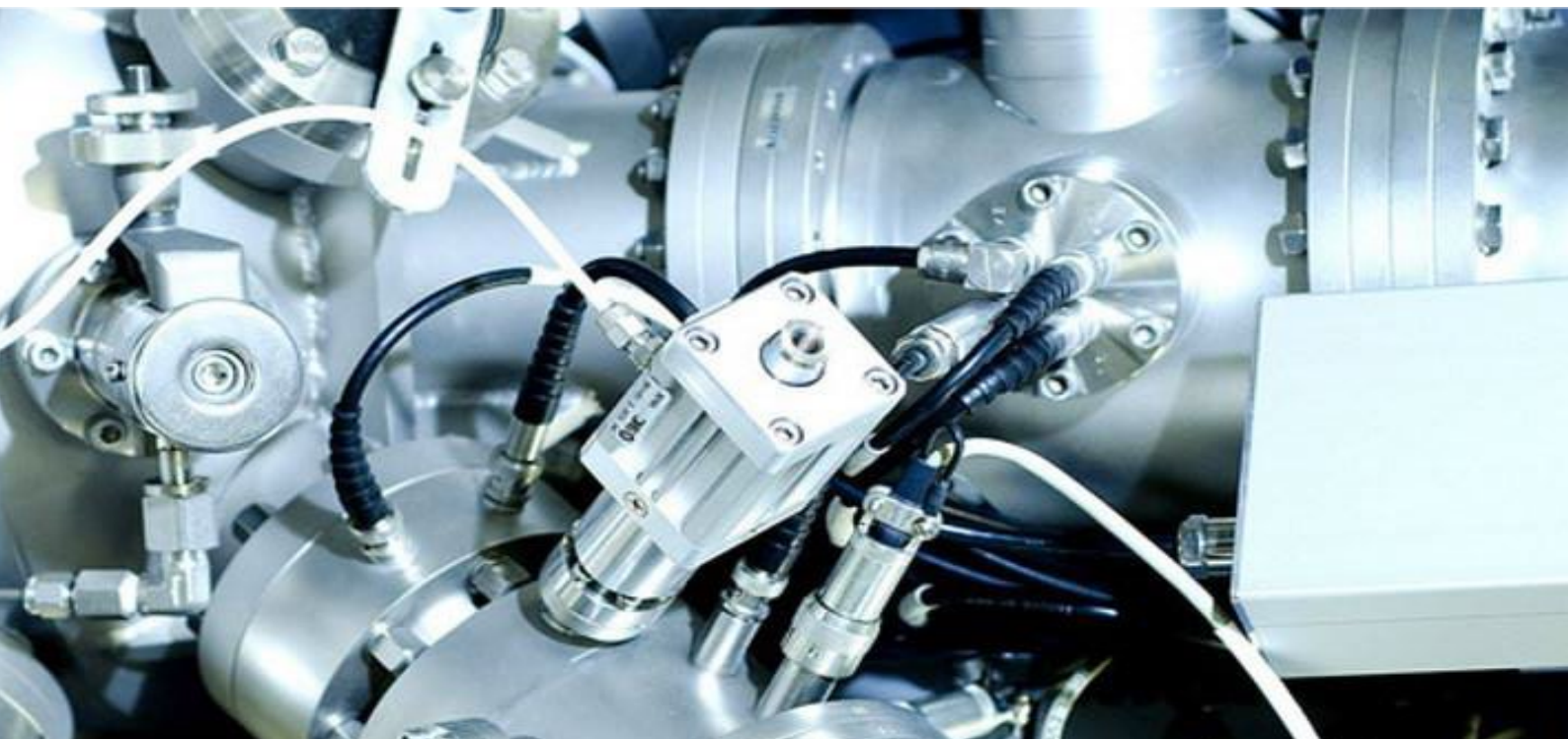
The Panel will be seeking to answer the following core questions:

1. Is the project clearly defined?
2. Are the objectives realistic and achievable in the time period available?
3. Will the project provide adequate research training for the student to at least MPhil level?
4. Is the programme of work likely to provide a sufficient foundation for PhD study?
5. Does the student show evidence of at least a basic understanding of the research topic, the nature of the approach being taken to investigate it and the relationship of the work to other research in the field?
6. Are the Supervisory arrangements, including meeting schedules, satisfactory?
7. Is the student content with the research environment?

Note: Supervisors are required to complete a short report on PhD Manager prior to the assessment meeting. Assessors are asked to email the Chair of the assessment panel with a short paragraph of their comments two days prior to the initial assessment.

Procedure

- An Assessment Panel, comprising a reviewer (suggestions are requested from the Supervisors) and a Chairperson, will be appointed by the RD / PGT. The other individuals present at the assessment will be the PhD Researcher, at least one Supervisor and, possibly, an adviser, if one has been appointed.
- Your initial assessment report should be submitted to and assessed via PhD Manager. Once you receive the date of your assessment, please log into PhD Manager and click on *PhD Research Project* followed by *Initial Assessment* to initiate the process.
A training video is available at the following link to guide you through this process: <https://ulster.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=8b9e3030-8978-4fd8-a582-a98b00fddac8>
- *Your report needs to be uploaded no later than 10 calendar days before your initial assessment. The report you upload should be approved by your Supervisor as the final version - changes to the submitted document cannot be made.*
- *PhD Researchers also need to submit the report document to Turnitin for a plagiarism check. The process to obtain your Turnitin report is straightforward – simply access the relevant area within Blackboard (www.learning.ulster.ac.uk), enter your usual password and select 'Courses'. From here, you should see 'PhD Researchers Turnitin'. You then just need to click on the icon for your Faculty and follow the upload instructions. Within Blackboard, there are various guides on submitting an assignment, which you may follow if you have any difficulties. Additional support can be provided by the admin staff within the School.*
- Once you have uploaded your assignment through the link you just need to login again after a period of time (usually 30 minutes or so) and click on the link again. You will then see your Turnitin report instead of an option to upload. *It is important that you do not use this system to 'test' your submissions or work at any stage as this will affect the final Turnitin report, which will show a higher similarity index than expected.*
- Note that you should upload the FULL Turnitin report not just the submission receipt.



4.2 Confirmation Assessment Guidelines

Purpose

Within the first year of study, at approximately month 10 for full-time PhD Researchers and month 20 for part-time Researchers (assuming there are no exceptional circumstances), PhD researchers shall apply to Senate for confirmation of their registration status. As a result of this assessment the student will either have his/her PhD registration status confirmed, will be invited to transfer registration and continue studying for the degree of MPhil or will be withdrawn from study – the process is again conducted via PhD Manager.

Content

The assessment comprises written and oral elements and should be organised in close co-operation with the project Supervisors.

1) The written element comprises two components:

- a) A Literature Review, in font Arial 12 with 1.5 line spacing, not exceeding 30 A4 pages, including any relevant additional information contained in appendices. Please note that the reviewer is not required to read beyond the 30 pages limit. References are not included within the 30-page limit.

The Literature Review should:

- Identify the area in which the student's research is being undertaken.
- Describe the particular problem being addressed.
- Summarise relevant work in that area.
- Conclude with a summary evaluation of previous work (possibly in tabular form) showing strengths and weaknesses. This should reveal the knowledge gap(s) that the student's research is attempting to fill.

- b) A progress update, a written summary of the work completed to date, not exceeding 10 A4 pages.

The progress update should:

- Identify the primary aim of the research project.
- Summarise the work completed to date, and identify any conferences, publications or presentations to date or planned for the near future.
- Outline the plan of activity for the remaining period of study (including a Gantt chart).
- Summarise the thesis outline emphasizing the structure and how it meets the research aims.

The progress report and literature review should be merged together and uploaded to PhD manager as one document.

2) Oral Presentation

PhD Researchers are expected to give an oral presentation to the Assessment Panel, using appropriate materials, e.g. PowerPoint, summarising the information contained in the written components.

The following points are suggested as guidelines (not requirements) for the presentation content:

- Title slide.
- Background to the problem.
- Aims of the research and planned contribution to knowledge.

- Progress to date, with a plan of activity for the remaining period.
- Thesis outline, emphasising its logical structure and how it meets the aims of the research.
- Conferences/journal publications/presentations to date or proposed.
- Summary slide.

Assessment

A maximum of one hour is set aside for each Confirmation Assessment. The presentation will normally last between 10-15 minutes, followed by up to 30 minutes for the Panel to question the student and Supervisors(s). The final 10-15 minutes will be a private discussion between the Panel and the Supervisor(s). The Researcher will then be invited back into the room to hear the outcome of the assessment.

The Assessment Panel will consider the following questions:

1. Have the objectives of the first 10 (20) months period of work been achieved?
2. Is the proposed programme of work a logical extension of the completed studies?
3. Are the defined objectives likely to be achieved with the available resources?
4. Is the work likely to provide adequate research training to doctorate level for the student?
5. Is the work sufficiently well defined to (potentially) provide publishable work within a 12-18 (24-30) month period?
6. Can the practical studies be completed within the next 18-20 (30) month period?
7. Does the student show evidence of ability to critically evaluate the work and place it within the context of related studies?
8. Are the Supervisors satisfied with the student's progress to date?
9. Is the student satisfied with the current Supervisory arrangements?
10. Should the student be permitted to confirm registration status of PhD?

Note: Supervisors are required to complete a short report on PhD Manager prior to the assessment meeting. Assessors are asked to email the Chair of the assessment panel with a short paragraph of their comments 2 days prior to the initial assessment.

Procedure

- An Assessment Panel, comprising a reviewer (usually the same reviewer as the initial assessment) and a chairperson, will be appointed by the RD / PGT. The other individuals present at the viva will be the PhD Researcher, at least one Supervisor and, possibly, an adviser, if one has been appointed.
- *Upon receipt of the date for your confirmation assessment, please log in to PhD Manager and click on the PhD Research Project followed by Confirmation Assessment to initiate the process. A training video is available at the following link to guide you through this process: <https://ulster.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=8b9e3030-8978-4fd8-a582-a98b00fddac8>*
- *All paperwork needs to be uploaded no later than calendar 10 days before your confirmation assessment. The reports you upload are final and cannot be changed so please ensure they the reports have been discussed with your Supervisor and are correct at the time of upload.*
- *PhD Researchers need to submit the document to Turnitin for a plagiarism check. The process to obtain your Turnitin report is as described in the initial assessment guide. It is important that you do not use this system to 'test' your submissions or work at any stage as this will affect the final Turnitin report, which will show a higher similarity index than expected.*

4.3 Final Assessment Guidelines

Purpose

To help prepare for the final submission of your thesis and the viva examination, the Final Assessment will take place at 30 months (full-time) and 60 months (part-time) of initial registration.

The Final Assessment will take the form of a structured meeting to discuss progress towards completion of your Thesis. The meeting will be undertaken in collaboration with your Supervisors. In advance of the meeting PhD Researchers should complete the Final Assessment Template (available on SharePoint, see Section 7 or via Charly Mifsud), which will help prompt the discussion at the meeting with Supervisor.

Content and Procedure

1. PhD Researchers should first talk to your Supervisors to set up a meeting for the Final Assessment. The School administrator will also prompt Researchers and Supervisors to plan the final assessment.
2. Once the meeting date has been identified, you should begin the Final Assessment process through PhD Manager. This will allow for the formal assessment to be made by your Supervisors.
3. The Final Assessment Template should be used to record details of the assessment:
 - A review of the research plan submitted during the Confirmation Assessment should be undertaken (the aims and objectives of the thesis and thesis structure should be updated and agreed). Key findings and contributions to knowledge could be identified within each section /Chapter of the proposed thesis plan.
 - A submission timeline – plan the work required to complete your PhD and submit in a timely fashion, identify when you will begin writing your thesis, when/how your Supervisors will receive a first draft/chapters and when/how you will receive feedback on the submissions. *A realistic submission date for the final thesis should be agreed.*
 - A discussion of potential External Examiners for your viva (thesis defence) may be undertaken.
4. You should aim to submit the required Template 10 days in advance of your meeting to allow your Supervisors to prepare for the Final Assessment meeting. Submissions of the Final Assessment Template should be made using PhD Manager.
5. Following the assessment, your Supervisor will provide comments/feedback (through PhD Manager). This should include:
 - A short description of progress to date.
 - Comment on how far the PhD Researcher is from completion and if the current plan/timetable is feasible. Proposed key dates associated with preparation of the final thesis should be included, likely within the Assessment Template. The expected submission date should be stated.
 - If required, a statement of difficulties/issues encountered or significant events preventing timely submission should be included.
 - If required, a statement detailing additional support required to ensure thesis submission.
 - Any other comments.

Feedback should be shared with the PhD Researcher and discussed at the next Supervisory meeting.

4.4 Preparing your Thesis and Final Viva

The Thesis and Final Viva process has been updated, with all aspects now carried out on PhD Manager.

Please speak with your Supervisor and refer to the Doctoral College website for guidance on preparing your thesis (<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/current/submitting-your-thesis>). Doctoral College organise regular training events to help you prepare for your final viva, your Supervisory team will usually conduct a mock viva close to the date of your final viva.

A range of Guides on PhD Manager give you step-by-step instructions on submission of your Thesis <https://phdmanager.ulster.ac.uk/do/activity/guides/all> - in particular, Sections 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3.

Please read the information carefully and ensure you and your Supervisor are aware of what is expected when completing this process on PhD Manager. Contact Charly Mifsud if you need support.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisors to select and liaise with Examiners in advance of the Viva. A guide for Supervisors is available in Section 9.3 of the PhD Manager website.



5.0 Useful Links for PhD Researchers

PhD Manager: <https://phdmanager.ulster.ac.uk/>

PhD Manager is the system used to record all activities in your PhD. Supervisor meetings, initial assessments, confirmation assessments, final assessments and vivas, changes to Supervisors, project titles etc., leave requests, training and final assessments will all be recorded on PhD Manager. Log in using your University email address through the link above. Guides are available on PhD Manager for processing requests etc. via the system: <https://phdmanager.ulster.ac.uk/do/activity/guides/all>

Doctoral College: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/home>

The Doctoral College website includes handbooks and policies, guidelines for your PhD, information on the Researcher Development Programme and Information for International PhD Researchers. Details of events and competitions for PhD Researchers across the University will also be advertised on the Doctoral College Website. An excellent FAQ section is available here: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/current-phd-researchers/faqs>

Researcher Development Programme: www.ulster.ac.uk/researcherdevelopment

This website gives an overview of all the training and development opportunities available to PhD Researchers as well as additional activities such as PhD Researcher-led Initiatives, Festival of PhD Research and the Three Minute Thesis competition.

School of Engineering Research Website includes details of the research conducted within the School, including current projects, staff lists and information on facilities and equipment. <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/faculties/computing-engineering-and-the-built-environment/schools/engineering/research>

A list of the major pieces of equipment within NIBEC can be found here: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/nibec/equipment/equipment>, the facilities booking system for NIBEC is available at: http://www.supersaas.co.uk/schedule/ERI_Equipment/NIBEC

Information relating to capabilities at NIACE is available here: <http://www.niace-centre.org.uk/>

The booking system for equipment in Block 6 is available here https://www.supersaas.co.uk/schedule/UUEngineeringBlock6/School_of_Engineering. Guide to using the system can be found in the appendices.

Following training, please use the above links to book time on the equipment in NIBEC and Block 6. Supervisors will discuss equipment needs with PhD Researchers and will arrange for training. Note: Risk and COSHH assessments must be completed when appropriate with details communicated to the Engineering Facilities Coordinator, Mr Brian McGrath (b.mcgrath@ulster.ac.uk).

6.0 Additional Information

6.1 Accommodation Details

PhD Researchers will be invited to attend a local induction during registration week, where you will have to opportunity to meet key staff within your research area. You will be assigned a desk in you first week of study. PhD Researchers will discuss needs for a computer etc. with their Supervisors and any arrangements will be made as soon as possible after registration. There are kitchen facilities including tea/coffee making facilities and fridges/microwaves in many locations throughout Belfast. PhD Researchers will be given facilities tour during the local induction.

6.2 Technical Support

Technical support for PC's is available within NIBEC via Mr Damien McDonald (d.mcdonald@ulster.ac.uk) and Dr Paddy Porter (p.porter@ulster.ac.uk). Please use the Feynman ticket system to raise any problems and get technical assistance. Guide and link to the ticket system in appendices.

6.3 PhD Budgets

PhD Researchers in receipt of Scholarship funding will receive an annual or monthly budget for the purchasing of materials/equipment or for attendance at conferences or training etc. Specific scholarships have different funding structures. PhD Budgets will be discussed at local induction and Supervisors will agree with PhD Researchers how this budget will be spent throughout the course of the PhD. An account of your budget will be held by the Admin Contact for your area.

6.4 Change Requests

Throughout the course of study, changes in circumstances may occur. Change requests are processed through the PhD Manager system. Guides are available on PhD Manager to aid processing changes including, but not limited to, Change of Supervisors; Change of Project Title; Leave of Absence; Extension of Time.

6.5 Research Seminar Series

The School is reinvigorating the Research Seminar Series to provide PhD researchers with an opportunity to practice oral presentation skills, share research findings with your peers, hear from leading experts visiting the School and from School staff. Contact Charly Mifsud (C.Mifsud@ulster.ac.uk).

6.6 Campus Social Spaces

The Docs @Ulster have been established on each Campus to facilitate interdisciplinary interactions and to help you engage with other researchers. Many of the Doctoral College RDP events are based in the DOC and the space is available for researchers to use for work and social activities. The DOC can be found at BC-04-226.

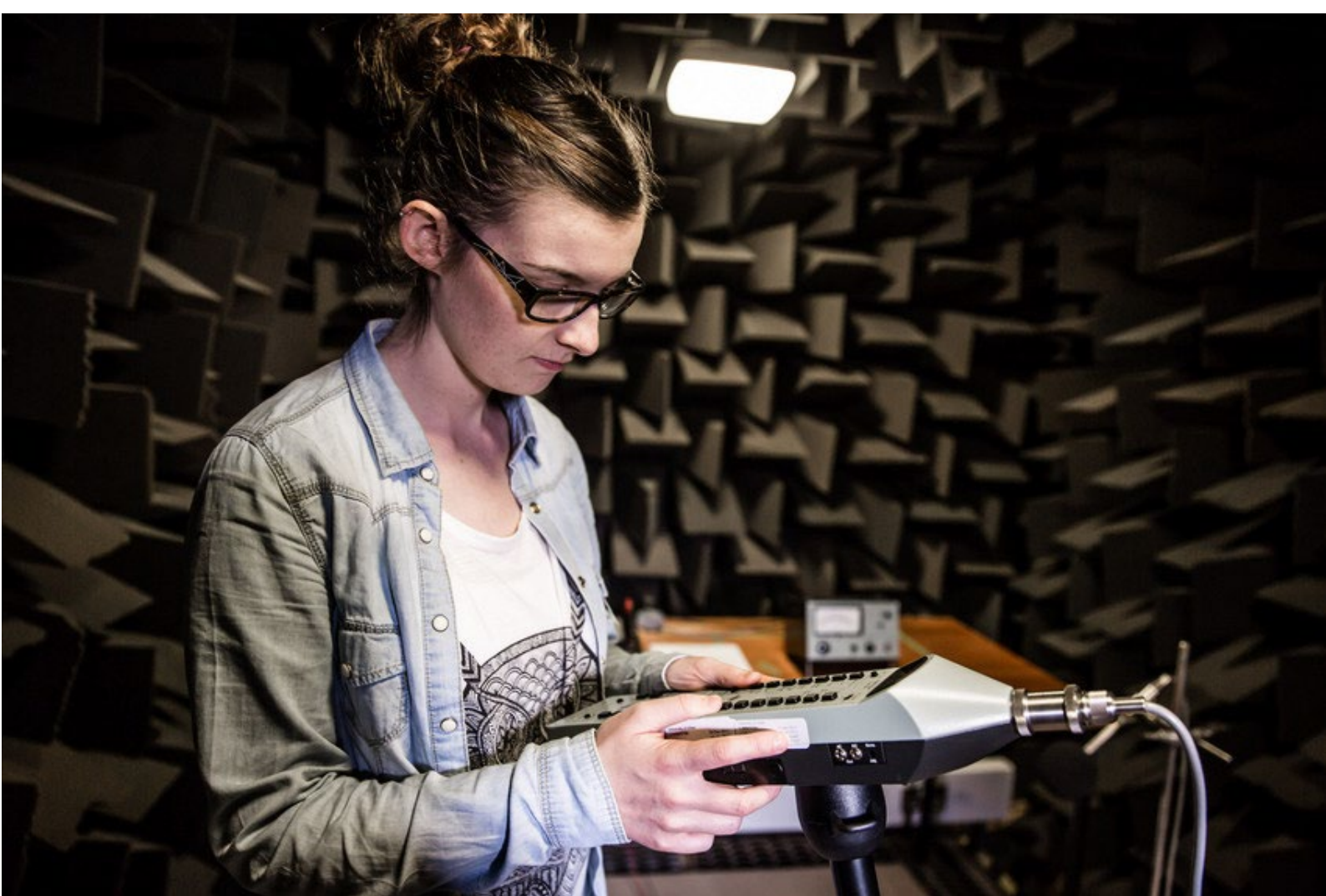
A large number of Student Societies organised by the UU Students Union, in particular the Ulster Society of Student Engineers (USSE) <https://www.uusu.org/organisation/usse/> and the Doctoral Society <https://www.uusu.org/organisation/uusudoctoral>.

6.7 COVID-19

Ulster University information, FAQs and guidance can be found on the UU Coronavirus webpage here: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/coronavirus>

Specific information for PhD Researchers can be found on the Doctoral College Coronavirus webpage here: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/coronavirus/staff/phd-researchers>

Any queries regarding the current local Covid-19 procedures should be directed to Charly Mifsud (c.mifsud@ulster.ac.uk) in the first instance.



6.8 Prior Approval Guidance

1. If you wish to go to a conference, please speak to your supervisor to discuss the details. Supervisors can recommend the cost code to be used and can make suggestions in relation accommodation etc.
2. Fill out the Prior Approval (PA) form (guidance below).
3. Send PA to Charly Mifsud (C.Mifsud@ulster.ac.uk) no later than 2 weeks before you are due to travel.
4. If the PA is to be charged to your PhD cost code, Charly will check to ensure you have appropriate funds in your budget to cover the costs.
5. If the PA has been filled in correctly, it will go to the relevant signatory to be authorised. This is usually the Research Director but might need Executive Dean approval and business case if further approval is required.
6. Once signed off, it will be sent to Payments to generate a PA number. This can take 10 days.
7. Once the PA number has been generated, the conference can be paid for, and all flight/accommodation (if applicable) can be booked via Key Travel (see PhD OneDrive).

ULSTER UNIVERSITY

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSED EXPENDITURE ON A VISIT OR COURSE OF STUDY

Leave blank – finance will provide the PA number.

Add your B number here.

NAME : Claim No.

Contact Address/Room Number (including school & faculty where applicable) Staff No.

.....

Contact Number Telephone/Extension.....

Place of visit/course

.....

Purpose of Visit/Course

Duration of visit/course: FROM 20 TO 20

Estimated Cost:

	£	p
Course Fee		
Subsistence		
Air/Boat Travel.....		
Coach /Taxi.....		
Rail Travel		
Sundries (please specify).....		
Total		

Cost Centre

IF THE TOTAL IS £1000 OR MORE A BUSINESS CASE IS REQUIRED

Signed Applicant Date

I recommend the approval of this application
..... Dean/Head of Department

£

p

Fill in Cost Centre here.

If PhD Cost Code is to be used, enter 70215U.

If another cost code is to be used, please ask your supervisor for the code.

Please ensure all costs are filled in.

Accommodation can be listed under sundries.

Food should be listed under subsistence.

7.0 Appendices

Online versions of relevant Forms can be obtained from SharePoint: https://ulster-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/c_mifsud_ulster_ac_uk/EgNyGbmZlc9KrKBJ8KINENABfUrNqaU35PWJdyJKTHDWOG?e=spJzm5

7.1 Prior Approval Form

ULSTER UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSED EXPENDITURE
ON A VISIT OR COURSE OF STUDY

NAME: _____ Claim No.

--	--	--	--	--

Contact Address/Room Number (including school & faculty where applicable): _____ Staff No.

--	--	--	--	--

Contact Number Telephone/Extension: _____
Place of visit/course: _____
Purpose of Visit/Course: _____
Duration of visit/course: FROM _____ 20__ TO _____ 20__
Estimated Cost:

	£	p
Course Fee		
Subsistence		
Air/Boat Travel		
Coach / Taxi		
Rail Travel		
Sundries (please specify)		
Total		

Cost Centre

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

IF THE TOTAL IS £1000 OR MORE A BUSINESS CASE IS REQUIRED

Signed _____ Applicant Date _____
I recommend the approval of this application _____
Dean/Head of Department

For use by Finance Officer

To: _____ Claim No.

--	--	--	--	--

DESIGNATION _____
Your application for proposed expenditure on a visit / course from _____ 20__ to _____ 20__ has been considered and the amount provisionally approved is £ _____. Receipts as appropriate must be attached to final claim.
Date: _____ 20__ Signed: _____

7.2 Travel Expenses Claim Form

ULSTER UNIVERSITY
CLAIM FOR TRAVELLING EXPENSES AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES
ON A VISIT OR COURSE OF STUDY

NAME OF CLAIMANT: _____
DESIGNATION (including Faculty where applicable): _____
Visit to: _____

Staff No.

--	--	--	--	--

PA No.

--	--	--	--	--

Period from _____ a.m. on _____ 20__ to _____ p.m. on _____ 20__

Purpose of Visit: _____

DETAILS OF CLAIM:

Course Fee	_____
Air Travel (Tourist Class)/Boat Travel (Authorized Class)	_____
Rail Travel	_____
Coach/Bus Fares/Car Expenses	_____
Taxi Cabs	_____
Meals	_____
Other (please detail)	_____

(Vouchers and Receipts must be attached. Failure to provide may render the claim for that item invalid).

Cost Centre

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Total _____
Nominal Code

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Less: Advances _____
Total Amount Due _____

I certify that this expenditure was incurred solely on behalf of the Ulster University and that the allowances claimed are in strict accordance with the prescribed Regulations.

Date: _____ Signed: _____
Claimant

This claim is recommended for payment.

Date: _____ Signed: _____
Authorized Signatory

Signatory Please Print Name: _____

Return form and receipt to:
Payments Section
Finance Department
Room X314
Coleraine Campus

7.5 Requisition Form

Requisition Reference & file name YYMMDD Initials <small>Format - YYMMDDInitials Company eg 121018AB Sigma</small>		Quotes Quotes should be attached to the email as a separate file All INI and EU funded projects require at least 2 quotes or a Sole Supplier form to be completed Link to Sole Supplier form Orders over £5,000 require 3 quotes. Link to Procurement website		Currency GBP Cost Centre Project Number Today's date	
Requester's Name Tel no + e-mail address School/Faculty/Dept. ERI Suggested Supplier : Suppliers Address/website Suppliers Tel No Quote Ref No					

Item Line	Product Code	Requisition Line Description	Unit of Purchase e.g. Box of 10	Quantity	Unit Price ex VAT	Line Value ex VAT
1						£ -
2						£ -
3						£ -
4						£ -
5						£ -
6						£ -
7						£ -
8						£ -
9	Delivery					£ -
					Total exc VAT	£ -
					VAT	£ -
					Order Value	£ -

Everything the supplier will charge you for should be detailed on this Requisition e.g. Carriage :
 Service Costs etc should be entered on a separate line.

Requested by : _____ Approved by: _____
(electronic signature) Supervisor/PI

7.6 Technical Support Ticket System Guide

Technical Support Ticket System

The system can be found at

<https://feynman.ulster.ac.uk/rt/> and you should login with your staff/student number and password as usual.

Important

When you first login, you will need (once only) to tell the system your email address.

Hover on "Logged in as e..." at the top;

Hover on "Settings" that will appear;


Click on "About Me";

Fill in the details on identity in the top left;

Click "Save Preferences" at the bottom



7.7 SuperSaaS Booking System Guide (speak to Dr Paddy Porter)



School of Engineering – SuperSaaS User Guide

In the effort to keep the system as fair as possible there are a few rules for use with the SuperSaaS booking systems for the School of Engineering equipment located in both Block 6 and NIACE.

Links: [Block 6 SuperSaaS system](#),
[NIACE SuperSaaS system](#), Password: ULSTER

- The equipment/area can only be used if it is booked.
- When booking the equipment/area please add an extra 30 to your booking time to allow for a system decontamination in between users. i.e. if you need the equipment/area for 2hrs book it for 2hr 30mins.
- You cannot make a booking more than 2 weeks in advance.
- You cannot have more than 2 days booked at any time for any one piece of equipment within a 2-week period.
- If you require training on any piece of equipment please contact the relevant area technical coordinator or engineer.
- A calibration record for the DSC is kept in the Thermal analysis lab. If you require particular recalibration for this piece of kit please contact Simon Hodge.
- If you are struggling to place a booking due to the high demand on a particular piece of equipment then contact Paddy Porter.
- If you require to book a piece of equipment for an extended period of time approval is required by Paddy Porter.
- Ultimately Ulster University final year students, when nearing the end of their degree, will receive priority usage of equipment.
- Any materials being used must have completed and approved COSHH, included SDS/MSDS and Technical Data Sheet.
- Ensure materials being used can be processed as desired. Seek approval from relevant area technical coordinator or engineer.

If you are not sure about anything regarding the booking system please add a request to the online ticket system. The system can be found [here](#), please login in using your staff or student number and password as usual.