Dublin City University
Family Business PhD Scholarship
Guidelines for Applicants

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Overview

DCU Business School invites applications for a PhD scholarship focusing on trust in family firms. The scholarship is open to applicants registering for Year 1 of the full-time PhD programme in DCU Business School for the 2025/2026 academic year. The student will be supervised by Dr. Eric Clinton (eric.clinton@dcu.ie) and Dr. Catherine Faherty (catherine.faherty@dcu.ie).

Our PhD programme combines rigorous theory-building with a strong applied focus. Research scholars work under the supervision of academic experts and are integral members of DCU Business School's vibrant research community.

Trust in Family Business

We invite applications for a four-year PhD scholarship focusing on the pivotal role of trust in family businesses. Family businesses, characterised by unique dynamics and long-term perspectives, often rely on trust to sustain relationships across generations. However, as family businesses expand and evolve, maintaining trust becomes increasingly challenging. Factors such as changing family dynamics, generational shifts, and the complexities of managing both personal and professional relationships can erode trust—an element crucial to the longevity and success of the business and the family.

This research aims to examine the factors that build or weaken trust in family firms, with the goal of developing actionable insights to support their continued growth and stability.

Applications are sought from exceptional graduates in Ireland and abroad. Applicants should demonstrate an outstanding academic record at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in any discipline and have research interests in one or more of the following areas:

- Family Business and/or SMEs
- Organisational Behaviour
- Strategic Management
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Human Resources
- Leadership and Talent

The Scholarship

The scholarship includes:

- An annual stipend of €22,000 per annum (for up to four years).
- Payment of PhD fees (for up to four years).

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must meet the PhD eligibility criteria of DCU: DCU PhD Eligibility Criteria. Typically, applicants should hold an honours master's degree (taught or by research). Students in the final year of a master's programme may also apply.
- This scholarship is exclusively for full-time PhD study based at DCU for the duration of the award. Successful applicants will register for Year 1 during the 2025/2026 academic year.
- Applicants must disclose any additional stipend or external sources of funding. DCU Business School scholars receiving the annual stipend of €22,000 are generally not permitted to concurrently hold scholarships or educational grants exceeding €4,000 per annum.
- The scholarship will commence on 2nd March 2025.
- International applicants intending to travel to Ireland must meet visa requirements prior to the commencement of the scholarship. Payments cannot be processed until the applicant has arrived in Ireland, set up a bank account, and applied for a PPS number.

Scholarship Application Guidelines and Process

- Applicants must submit a completed Family Business PhD Scholarship Application Form, including a research proposal. The application must be typed.
- Submit the application as a single PDF file via email to DCU Business School Research Officer, Ruth Finnegan, at dcubsresearch@dcu.ie.
- The file should be named in the format: surname_firstname_DCUNCFB_2025.pdf.
- Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.
- Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by email.
- Applicants wishing to withdraw their application after submission should notify the Research Officer at their earliest convenience.
- Shortlisted applicants may be required to attend an interview, either in person or via Zoom.
- The scholarship award is conditional on acceptance of a place in the PhD programme.

Submission Dates

- Call Opens: Monday, 2nd December 2024.
- Deadline: Applications must be received by 12:00 PM GMT, Friday, 10th January 2025.
- Interviews will be conducted shortly thereafter.

Assessment Process

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of evaluators from DCU Business School. Assessments will follow these weightings:

APPLICATION FORM SECTION	WEIGHTING*
1. Biographical & Application Information	not applicable
2. Academic Record a) prior academic record b) prior relevant business or work experience c) publications	 30% 24% 6%
3. Research Proposal	40%
4. Signature	not applicable

**Note*: Sections 1 and 4 of the application form must be completed for the application to be considered, even though they are not weighted.

Enquiries

For enquiries about the Family Business Scholarship Scheme, contact:

- Email: Ruth Finnegan, Research Officer: dcubsresearch@dcu.ie
- Telephone: +353 (0)1 700 8106

Notes on Section 2: Academic Record

This section accounts for 60% of the overall assessment, reflecting the emphasis on identifying exceptional candidates. It is divided into three categories: qualifications, experience, and publications.

- Qualifications: Evaluators will consider academic grades, class rankings, and previous awards. Highlight any research-based capstone modules, such as a dissertation.
- Experience: Relevant work or professional experience, including research assistant roles or participation in research projects, will be considered.
- Publications: While not mandatory, experience preparing research for conferences or journals will strengthen your application.

Additional considerations include suitability for PhD research, motivations for pursuing a research degree, and long-term career plans. Include any information that strengthens your application.

Notes on Section 3: Research Proposal

This section accounts for 40% of the overall assessment. Only research proposals related to trust in family business will be considered. Proposals should not exceed 3,000 words (excluding references) and must address:

- Background, research question, and objectives
- Preliminary literature review
- Research methodology
- Expected theoretical and practical impacts

Insert the research proposal directly into the relevant section of the application form, including a list of relevant references.