

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee on Thursday 6th February, 2003 in Room 2026, Arts & Social Sciences Building.

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| Present (Chair) | Dean of Graduate Studies |
| Dean of Research | Prof. M. Gibney |
| Arts (Humanities) | Dr. M.-A. Valiulis |
| Arts (Letters) | Prof. D. Singleton |
| | Dr. C. Morris |
| Business, Economic & Social Studies | Dr. K. Benoit |
| Engineering & Systems Science | Dr. A. Moore |
| | Dr. T. Orr |
| Health Sciences | Ms. A. Higgins |
| | Dr. F. Falkiner |
| Science | Dr. P. Kruger |
| GSU | Mr. D. Scammell |
| | Mr. T. O' Donnell |

In attendance: Ms. E. McGlade (Library), Ms. L. Donnellan (GSO)

Apologies: Dr. A. Chantler; Dr. E. Mahon; Dr. T. Kavanagh; Ms. G. Hogan; Mr. C. Travis

166.0 Minutes of the meeting of the 9th January, 2003

A number of changes were requested to the minutes of the meeting of the 9th January.

166.1 Matters arising

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that Prof. Philip Lane from the Department of Economics would be attending to discuss the proposed changes to the entry requirements for the Ph.D. in Economics. Changes to the wording had been approved by the Committee at its meeting of the 14th November 2002, but the implementation of these changes was on temporary hold while discussions were being held at Departmental level. He also reported that he had presented the Graduate Studies Annual Report to Council on the 5th February 2003 and that the report had been approved by Council. The M.Phil. in Irish Art History proposal had also been approved by Council at the same meeting.

Regarding the issue of application forms for postgraduate study being available to download from the Graduate Studies website, The Dean queried whether Agnes Higgins and Liz Donnellan had met to discuss putting the application forms for postgraduate Nursing courses on the Graduate Studies website. They confirmed that they had met to discuss that.

166.2 Proposed change to the Calendar regulations regarding the Ph.D. in Political Science - awarding of a lower degree

The Dean gave a brief background to this issue. A student who registers for the Ph.D. in Political Science and successfully completes a research proposal at the end of year two, may proceed to full-time work on their thesis. Successful completion of the thesis results in the award of the Ph.D. The current Calendar entry for the Ph.D. in Political Science states that a student who successfully completes a research proposal at the end of year two but who is unable or does not wish to continue with the course, 'will be offered an M.Phil. degree on satisfactory completion of a dissertation of 10,000 - 12,000 words'. However, an M. Phil. in Political Science does not exist as a separate award to the Ph.D. in Political Science. Therefore the mechanism for setting up an award structure for students who do not wish to proceed to the Ph.D. needs to be established. The Dean suggested that two possible solutions existed - that an M. Phil. in Political Science be established or that these students be awarded an M.Litt.

The Committee then discussed these two options and decided that it would be inappropriate to award an M. Litt. degree to a student who had completed course work and a minor dissertation, as an M. Litt. degree is essentially a research degree. They felt that it would be more appropriate to award an M. Phil. degree but that the following issues would need to be clarified -

1. What courses would students have completed by the end of year two?
2. How and when would problem students be identified and prepared for a minor dissertation?
3. What would the mechanisms be for supervising and examining a minor dissertation?

The Committee was of the opinion that the Department of Political Science should consider the option of establishing an M. Phil. as a separate course linked to the Ph.D. The Dean agreed to bring this proposal to the Department of Political Science for consideration.

166.3 Update on the proposed changes to the entry requirements for the Ph.D. in Economics

The Dean introduced Prof. Philip Lane, who presented a revised wording to the entry requirements for the Ph.D. in Economics to those originally approved by the Committee at its meeting of the 14th November 2002. The wording presented to the GSC meeting of the 14th November 2002 was:

'Students must have obtained a high standard in a taught masters degree in economics. Normally this degree should have a strong theoretical and quantitative content. Students who are currently completing their masters degree and who expect to achieve a high honours standard are also welcome to apply'

This wording was approved by the Committee at that meeting.

The revised wording presented by Prof. Lane reads as follows:

'A taught master's degree in economics from a well-ranked university is the normal requirement for admission to the Ph.D. register.'

The Committee considered the revised wording and requested that the reference to a well-ranked university be removed. The following version was then approved :

'A taught master's degree in economics is the normal requirement for admission to the Ph.D. register.'

166.4 Procedures for the award of higher degrees by research

This item had initially been brought to the Graduate Studies Committee meeting of the 7th March 2002 by The Dean. At that time the Committee agreed to suspend the awarding of doctorates by published research pending a revision of the procedures, as it was felt that the regulations governing the award of these degrees were too vague and needed to be clarified in a number of key areas.

The Dean presented a draft document to the Committee for approval, proposing the establishment of the following elements:

1. A set of guidelines for applicants
2. A dedicated application form for these degrees
3. A set of criteria for external assessors
4. A sub-committee of the Graduate Studies Committee to establish a *prima facie* case before external assessment for higher doctorates
5. Two fixed annual dates for admission
6. An application fee and a registration fee
7. A detailed application procedure

He undertook to bring detailed proposals for each to the next meeting.

The Committee discussed the proposal and were generally in favour of it, although it was anticipated that it would be difficult to establish criteria for awarding these degrees. The Dean agreed to return to the Committee with proposals for detailed guidelines.

166.5 Any other business

Dr Falkiner raised the issue of awarding grades for Masters degrees. The Dean said that the issue had been brought to Graduate Studies Committee previously and had been rejected. General College procedure was that while the coursework component of a taught Masters degree was graded, the overall degrees were not. The Committee discussed the merits of awarding grades for Masters degrees and the following points were raised:

- Would the awarding of grades lead to an unhealthy competition between students?
- Did official grading already exist for some Masters courses e.g. the M.Ed.?
- Would awarding a distinction be more appropriate?

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the present system seemed to be working well and that there seemed to be no evidence of student pressure for grading.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed. The next meeting is scheduled for the 6th March, 2003.

Signed :

Dated: