

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee on Thursday 16th October, 2003 in Room 2026, Arts & Social Sciences Building.

Present (Chair)	Dean of Graduate Studies
Arts (Humanities)	Dr. M.-A. Valiulis
	Dr. A. Kramer
Arts (Letters)	Dr. C. Morris
	Prof. D. Singleton
Business, Economic & Social Studies	Dr. J. McDonagh
Engineering & Systems Science	Dr. T. Orr
	Dr. A. Moore
GSU	Mr. John Walsh

In attendance: Mr. T. Peare (Library); Ms. G. Hogan (ISS); Ms. E. Sadowska (GSO); Ms. N. Saunders (GSO); Prof. D. Taylor (Engineering & Systems Sciences)

Apologies: Ms. M. Carroll; Dr. F. Falkiner; Mr. D. Scammell

The Dean began the meeting by welcoming the new members of the committee, Ms. M. Carroll (apologies sent), Dr. A. Kramer, Dr. J. McDonagh, Mr. T. Peare and Ms. E. Sadowska.

172.0 Minutes of the meeting of the 6th June, 2003.

The minutes were approved by the Committee and signed by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

172.1 Matters arising

The Dean reported that the proposed termination of the M.Sc. in Community Health was now in discussion at Faculty level and he had been notified that the Faculty of Health Sciences will be proposing a revision of the course toward global health.

The Dean referred to item 170.7 of the meeting of 21st May 2003 'Teaching by postgraduate students: Principles for good practice'. The Dean had requested comments from the Committee at that meeting but said he had not yet received any feedback. He confirmed that his office would re-send the proposal to the Committee and the Committee would discuss any comments at the next meeting.

The Dean suggested a change in the order of items on the agenda and moved item 5 to be discussed next.

172.2 M.Sc. in Bioengineering - part-time fee proposal

The Dean explained that the Dept. of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering had brought a proposal to the Graduate Studies Committee in 2001 for a part-time option for the course, which the Committee had approved. However the Committee had not approved the Department's proposed fee structure: that students continuing into a second year should pay the same fee as the first year. The Department was re-presenting this proposal to the Committee, effectively

that the part-time option would be charged at twice the fee of the one-year full time option. The Dean noted that fees for self-financing courses were designed individually for each programme, subject to the approval of the Finance Committee. He further suggested that the mode of delivery of this course and its target audience made it a good candidate for the pilot scheme for modularisation approved last year by the Committee. Dr. Valiulis queried if approval of this unusual fee structure would have implications for other courses. The Dean expressed the belief that it would not.

The Dean introduced Prof. Taylor who summarised the proposal to charge the same annual fee for both full-time and part-time students. He said that students generally completed the course within two years if they took up the part-time option but he would wish to have a mechanism to allow students to take longer in special circumstances. The whole cohort on the M.Sc. in Bioengineering worked for companies, which release them to the course and pay their fees. Prof. Taylor expressed his opinion that on this basis, a part-time option was important to students working full-time and gave his view that the companies involved would be willing to pay the proposed fees. He also wished to charge part-time students who entered their second year this Michaelmas term the full annual fee.

The Committee questioned whether the sponsoring companies involved would be prepared to pay the same fee for both full- and part-time options as well as what would be, for this term, effectively a retrospective fee increase and Prof. Taylor confirmed that his enquiries had indicated that they would. Dr. Valiulis asked if the course was offered elsewhere in Ireland and Prof. Taylor explained that it was run jointly by three Colleges, TCD, the University of Limerick and the University of Ulster with some differences in fee structure and exam process but it was the same course and students could register at any of the three Colleges. The Dean thanked Prof. Taylor for attending.

The Committee approved the fee proposal, subject to approval by the Treasurer, with four provisos:

1. That the fee structure not be seen as setting a precedent for other part-time courses.
2. That two-year structure be applied to the part-time option but that the Course Committee may apply to the Dean of Graduate Studies for extensions in special cases.
3. That it recommended to the Course Committee that they consider participation in the pilot on modularisation conducted by the Dean.
4. That if the companies did not agree to pay the retrospective increase in fee, it would not be invoiced to the individual students.

172.3 New Postgraduate Studentship Scheme

The Dean reported that the new scheme was underway and will be reviewed at the end of the academic year. He summarised the guidelines to the scheme, stressing the role of Departments in the scheme. The Dean hoped that the Departments would report back to the Committee on the development of the scheme so that any problem areas could be resolved throughout the year.

Dr. Kramer pointed out the low value of the awards offered, especially by comparison with the Government of Ireland studentships, and asked if there were any possibility of raising the amount in the future. He also asked if students could hold two awards. The Dean explained that

the current income limit cannot exceed €12,700 and confirmed that this excludes students from holding other major awards such as the Government of Ireland award.

Dr. Valiulis congratulated the Dean on the new awards and asked if joint income limits eliminated students from receiving the awards. The Dean responded that the income limit applied to the student's income only.

Mr. Walsh commented that the award must be increased in future years to keep up with inflation. He further recommended that point 1 of the proposed guidelines be changed from "Teaching-related duties are assigned by the Head of Department and should consist of activities that are of professional benefit to the student" to "Teaching-related duties are assigned by the Head of Department and should consist of activities that are of professional and academic benefit to the student"

The Dean asked the Committee to email him with any comments or proposals for the guidelines and he would incorporate them into the document to be circulated to all Departments.

172.4 1937 Postgraduate Reading Room

The Dean announced that the Postgraduate Reading Room was now open and that the official opening would take place soon. The Committee responsible for the establishment of the facility would resort to being a Steering Committee, chaired by the Dean, and including the Librarian and the Deans of the Arts Faculties and BESS. Responsibility for managing the 1937 PRR would be assigned to a Management Committee, consisting largely of users and to be chaired by a representative from the Library, since the Reading Room would remain a Library building. Mr. Walsh reported that the swipe-card system was still causing some problems but was in process of being resolved. Not all research students in the Faculties of Arts and BESS were yet aware of this resource and it is envisaged that usage of the Reading Room will increase over the Michaelmas Term as students are notified by the Departments.

172.5 Any other Business

Dr. McDonagh raised the question of modularisation of taught courses and asked the Dean if there had been any progress in proposals. The Dean replied that, following approval of a pilot by the Committee last year, a number of proposals had been received and that he hoped to begin to establish the pilot scheme this academic year. Dr. McDonagh proposed that the M.B.A. be included in discussions.

Dr. Morris asked the Dean if the Graduate Studies Office followed any formal policy in relation to students with a disability. The Dean replied that the Graduate Studies Office scrupulously follows College policy in relation to disability and does not allow discrimination on the basis of disability. The Office supports students with disability as much as it can with regard to special examinations and extensions on the register. Ms. Hogan stated that a continuing problem was reluctance by some students to notify College of special needs.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.00 am. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 13th November 2003.

Signed:

Date: