

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE**

**GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 pm on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2004  
Boardroom, Provost's House

**Present:** Chair: Dean of Graduate Studies (Prof. Patrick J. Prendergast), Dean of Research (Prof. Ian Robertson), Mr Trevor Peare, Ms Adele Notley, Prof. Terence Brown, Dr Christine Morris, Dr John Donegan, Dr Trevor Hodgkinson, Dr Evelyn Mahon, Dr Frederick Falkiner, Prof. Vincent Cahill, Mr Ryan Sheridan,

**In attendance:** Ms Ewa Sadowska, Ms Sarah Byrne, Ms Alexandra Anderson for the agenda items 4 a & b;

**Apologies:** Dr Vasilis Politis, Dr Alan Kramer, Dr Brian Lucey, Mr Gerard Tobin, Dr Alan Moore, Mr Charles Larkin, Mr Ronan Hodson

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**183.0 Minutes of the Meetings of 21 October 2004 and 30 November 2004**

Both sets of minutes were approved by the Committee as circulated with an amendment *re* the minutes of 30 November 2004, to say that the ranking of Schools on a scale of research activity for the funding purposes had been proposed as an additional assessment rather than an alternative to the one in the ARAM document.

**183.1 Matters arising**

The Dean of Research commented that it might not be possible to objectively assess and rank research activity of Schools by a panel of assessors internal to College. He advised that he intends to bring to the next Research Committee a proposal for external assessors, whose role would be to compare the staff research output against the international criteria. He also clarified that the ARAM proposal to link funding to the number of Ph.D. students aims at measuring research activity and is not an ideal measure of research quality. Some members of the Committee pointed out that some academic policy should be built around the fact that in the area of Arts Letters, Arts Humanities and BESS supervisors do not get a direct credit on their list of publications for doctoral theses awarded to their Ph.D. students unlike in Sciences, Engineering and Health Sciences where joint publications are more common.

**183.2 Postgraduate Admissions 2004 data for research and taught courses**

The Dean of Graduate Studies spoke to the circulated research admissions 2004 data and taught courses 2004 data as tabled, and explained that this type of data had been collected and made available to the Committee for the first time. He thanked the Graduate Studies Office for its effort in gathering the data which had been done for the most part manually. With regard to research admissions for 2004, the Dean commented on some departments in the areas of Arts Letters, Arts Humanities and BESS which unlike in Science, Engineering and Health Sciences had rejected more research applicants than they had accepted, even though they still seem to have some vacant capacity. It was explained that applicants to departments in Science, Engineering and Health Sciences would have normally secured supervision prior to submitting their application unlike applicants in Arts, Humanities and BESS. Comments were also made in relation to the number of staff eligible to supervise in departments and the number of those eligible staff who do not seem to supervise. It was felt that the issue of workload for academic staff expected to supervise an increased number of research students should be comprehensively addressed. The Dean also advised that according to the current regulations supervisors for research degrees are either Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Research Professors, Research Senior Lecturers, or Research Lecturers. Members of the academic staff on contract may be supervisors, but in such cases a co-supervisor must also be nominated; the co-supervisor must agree to become the supervisor should the period of

registration extend beyond the contract period. Co-supervisors are not required for members of staff on contracts of indefinite duration. Visiting Professors and part-time members of the academic staff may be co-supervisors. With regard to admissions 2004 to taught courses it was emphasized that the data would need to be supplemented by additional information before it could be circulated further.

### **183.3 New course proposals:**

#### **a) Erasmus Mundus postgraduate courses - general issues**

Ms Alexandra Anderson outlined briefly the background and the issues for College where a postgraduate course were to be offered as an Erasmus Mundus (“EM”) one as is the case with an M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering. She explained that the EM programme entered into force in January 2004 as a result of the European Commission’s policy to strengthen EU-third country co-operation in higher education. The EM programme is a co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education, which promotes the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world. It supports European top-quality Masters Courses and enhances the visibility and attractiveness of European higher education in third countries. It also provides EU-funded scholarships for third-country nationals participating in these Masters Courses, as well as scholarships for EU-nationals studying in third countries. EM will support about 100 EM Masters Courses of outstanding academic quality and will provide grants for some 5,000 graduate students from third countries to follow these courses. The duration of the programme is five years (2004-2008) with a planned financial envelope of €230 million for the whole period. The programme coincides with the so-called “Lisbon strategy”: EU governments have committed themselves to making Europe the most competitive and dynamic economy in the world and to turning European system into a world-wide reference for excellence and quality. EM also supports the “Bologna process” by helping to converge the European degree structures, which will make European higher education more transparent and attractive. EM Masters Courses are integrated study programmes at masters level which are offered by at least three universities in three different European countries, and which foresee a period of study in at least two universities in two different European countries. An EM Masters Course carries between a minimum of 60 and up to 120 ECTS credits at masters level which corresponds to courses lasting from one up to two academic years. An integrated study programme offered by an EM Masters consortium (the three universities offering one EM course) has the following features: joint criteria for admission and examination; common delivery of jointly developed curriculum or full recognition by the EM Masters consortium of courses which are developed and delivered separately, but make up a common standard course; a period of study in at least two of the three institutions participating in the consortium; and guaranteed award of a recognised joint, or a double or a multiple degree upon graduation (with the delivery of a double degree as a minimum requirement). Ms Anderson raised a number of issues with regard to the running of the proposed EM Masters Course in Mechanical Engineering, such as the role of the external examiner for the course, the monitoring system of the students’ academic progress and the right of appeal, the arrangements for the final examinations at the end of year 2, and the award of a joint degree. The Dean of Graduate Studies thanked Ms Anderson for her presentation and confirmed that currently the University of Dublin does not award joint degrees but an award of a double degree is possible.

#### **b) M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering Erasmus Mundus (FT 2 years)**

Prof. Andrew Torrance talked to the circulated proposal of this new course. Prof. Torrance explained that this proposal is the only Trinity course, and one of very few courses in Ireland, approved by the Commission for the EM delivery. The new course is a development of an already existing M.Sc. Prof. Torrance explained that students who wish to follow this course must apply directly to the co-ordinating partner of the consortium (i.e. the INSA de Lyon) by the end of February 2005 on the consortium application form. There will be a Trinity representative on the admissions board. All applicants to Trinity would have to fulfil the normal TCD requirements for entry with regard to academic standards and the English language proficiency. Those successful to be recommended to the Dean of Graduate Studies for admission to TCD would need to submit a Trinity application form as well (but with an application fee waived) at a later stage prior to registration with Trinity. Late applicants to the course but not to the EM scholarship may apply directly to Trinity by 1 July in the year of intended entry. Prof. Torrance clarified that Trinity can only offer year 1 of the EM course which is year 4 of the current undergraduate B.A.I. degree programme. Prof. Torrance also advised that the INSA de Lyon is in the process of seeking accreditation for the course from a professional body in France. Some concern was expressed with respect to the current structure of the course which would permit EM students to spend only year 1 in Trinity, whereas year 2 would have to be spent either in Lyon or in Barcelona. This arrangement might facilitate

the retention of EM students in those countries, to the disadvantage of Trinity, for a doctoral programme after graduation from the EM M.Sc. course. It was clarified that access to the Library in Trinity would only be granted to the EM students for their period of registration in Trinity for year 1. The Dean of Graduate Studies clarified that once EM students register with Trinity they are bound by the rules and regulations of the University of Dublin Calendar with respect to the postgraduate academic progress, examinations and appeals unless there are specific rules under the EM programme overriding these. It was not clear if students in year 2 who, in the first instance would be subject to the regulations of a new university where they register for year 2, could appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies in Trinity. The Dean was of the view that clarification should also be sought from the consortium with regard to the remit of the EM Examination Board and that a meeting with the consortium representatives should be held in Trinity in January 2005 to address any outstanding academic and administrative issues. The Dean was not satisfied that INSA or Barcelona could purport to be awarding a joint degree with the University of Dublin which does not award such a degree. Subject to further clarifications to be reported at a later stage to the Committee, the Graduate Studies Committee gave the proposal a conditional approval subject to further clarification.

### **c) Modern Irish History (M.Phil./P.Grad. Dip.) FT 1 year**

The Dean invited Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer (Head of Department) and Prof. Eunan O'Halpin (Course Coordinator) to speak to the circulated documents. Prof. O'Halpin explained that given the quality of the resources, the expertise of the staff and the department's established track record as a centre of excellence for research and postgraduate training, the Department of Modern History is ideally placed to offer this unique taught M. Phil. The course was designed with an emphasis on generic professional training. As well as addressing the future professional needs of historians, in exploring the increasing variety and complexity of technical tools widely available for historical research, the M.Phil, together with the other taught M.Phils offered by the department, will fulfil the Bologna desiderata for providing structured professional training, information management skills required by 'knowledge based society and economy' and the capacity for continued, often self-directed life long learning. Graduates will have technical skills transferable not only to areas of historical scholarship unconnected with Ireland, but to the wider world of employment especially in terms of the management of information and knowledge. Prof. O'Halpin's view was that select training elements in this M.Phil. might form part of College's contribution to COIMBRA. The Dean of Graduate Studies thanked both Prof. Ohlmeyer and Prof. O'Halpin for their presentation and underlined the exemplary standard of quality of the submitted proposal which had also been commended as such by an external assessor, John Morrill, Professor of British and Irish History from the University of Cambridge. It was confirmed that entry to the course will only be via the M.Phil. but that exit will be available via a P.Grad.Dip. for students not proceeding to the masters level as per categories outlined in the proposal. Prof. Ohlmeyer advised that a contract lecturer would be recruited as a matter of urgency subject to Council and Board approval, and that the department undertook to cover any shortfall of monies in the first year from the income should the course not be in a position to meet its target number of non-EU fee paying students. Prof. Ohlmeyer also clarified that supervision would be based on the practice developed in M.Phil. in Reformation Studies, where dissertation topics are chosen by students early in Hilary Term and supervisors maintain a regular contact by email with their students over the summer. After a short discussion, the Committee approved the proposal.

### **183.4 IUQB: Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities. National Guidelines**

The item has been deferred.

### **183.5 Health Sciences Pilot Project 2005/06: Direct Admissions Scheme**

Dr Frederick Falkiner spoke to the circulated document and explained that at a meeting in early November 2004 a decision had been taken by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences to extend the 2004 Pilot Project for direct admissions for a further academic year 2005, subject to the outcome of restructuring and a satisfactory review of the Project in a year's time to be carried out by both Deans. The aim of the project is to achieve a swifter processing of applications for admissions in order to ensure minimal loss of applicants, especially from overseas, swifter dispatch of provisional letter of offer to enable overseas students to apply for an Irish visa and to inform successful candidates of their acceptance to the course before they receive a final letter of offer. The project was extended to cover nearly all M.Sc. and P.Grad. Dip. courses in Health Sciences (as per the circulated list), and would be administered by the School

of Research and Postgraduate Education, Trinity Centre for Health Sciences, St. James's Hospital. It was agreed that the School would advise of rejections and provisional acceptances on the official forms signed by the Director of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences) on behalf of the Dean of Graduate Studies who would continue to admit students to the University's postgraduate register with an official letter of final offer. It was intended that the project might become a model of a possible way forward for devolving postgraduate admissions to taught courses to newly formed schools as a result of the process of restructuring. The kernel of this change would require the on-line postgraduate application facility. The Dean of Graduate Studies undertook to investigate how feasible it would be to implement such a facility in College as a matter of urgency.

**183.6 AOB**

It was agreed that minutes of the Research Committee should be circulated for information to the members of the Graduate Studies Committee. There being no other business, the meeting ended at around 11am. The next meeting is scheduled for 27 January 2005 in the Conference Room 2026 in the Arts Building



**Prof. Patrick J. Prendergast**

Date: 27 January 2004