Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

ITEM 1

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held at 9am on Thursday 22nd March 2018
Boardroom, Provost's House

XX = Council relevance

***Present*:**   Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies   (*Chair*)
Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research   (*Ex officio*)
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Rachel Mary McLoughlin, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Dónall Mac Dónaill, School of Chemistry
Professor Paula Quigley, School of Creative Arts
Professor Michael O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Richard Reilly, School of Engineering
Professor Philip Coleman, School of English
Professor Eunan O'Halpin, School of Histories & Humanities
Professor Justin Doherty, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Deirdre Ahern, School of Law
Professor Lorna Carson, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences
Professor Stephen Smith, School of Medicine
Professor Mary Bourke, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Fiona Timmins, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Jean Quigley, School of Psychology
Professor David Shepherd, Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
Professor Agustin Benetrix, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy

Mr Shane Collins, Graduate Students' Union President   (*Ex officio*)
Mr Madhav Bhargav, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President
                                                                        (*Ex officio*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, CAPSL Representative
                                                                        (*Ex officio*)
Dr John O'Neill, Director of Academic Affairs, TT&L   (in attendance)
Ms Helen Thornbury (Office of Dean of Graduate Studies)   (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen O'Hara, Information Technology Services Representative
                                                            (in attendance *Ex officio*)
Ms Ewa Sadowska (Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning),
                                                            Secretary (*Ex officio)*

***Apologies*:**
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Sinéad Roden, Trinity Business School

Professor Owen Conlan, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor John Walsh, School of Education
Professor Seamus Joseph Martin, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Andreea Nicoara, School of Mathematics
Professor John Gilmer, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Mauro Ferreira, School of Physics
Professor Virpi Timonen, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub-Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience   (in attendance *Ex officio*)

GS/17-18/167 Minutes of 22nd February 2018
The minutes were approved as circulated.

GS/17-18/168 Matters Arising

Re: GS/16-17/110 A new online course proposal: Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Exercise (Top up and stand-alone): The Dean advised that the course proposal had been approved by the March Council.

Re: GS/17-18/138 A new course proposal: Postgraduate Certificate in Biological Psychiatry: The Dean advised that the course proposal had been approved by the March Council.

Re: GS/17-18/141 A new course proposal: MSc in Electronic Information Engineering: The Dean advised that the course proposal had been approved by the March Council.

Re: GS/17-18/142 A new course proposal: Dental Public Health strand of Doctorate in Dental Surgery (D.Ch.Dent.): The Dean advised that the course proposal had been approved by the March Council.

Re: GS/17-18/148 A new course proposal: MSc in Addiction Recovery: The Dean advised that a positive review of the course had been returned by an external reviewer, and the proposal was submitted to the next Council.

Re: GS/17-18/149 A new course proposal: MSc in Mechanical Engineering: The Dean advised that the course proposal had been sent out to an external reviewer.

Re: *GS/17-18/158 A new MEd strand proposal: Psychology of Education:* The Dean advised that Council approved the strand at its last meeting via the GSC minutes.

Re: GS/17-18/160 Dean of Graduate Studies' Annual Report 2016/17: The Dean advised that Council considered and approved the report at its last meeting.

Re: GS/17-18/161 New Academic Year Structure (AYS) and courts of examiners The Dean thanked all who had returned concerns to him by email and advised that he had advised the TEP office of the issues raised. He clarified again that all marks for taught modules on postgraduate courses had to be approved by a court of examiners, or an interim court where appropriate, if they were prerequisites to progression to dissertation or if assignments needed to be repeated when module were failed.

XX   **GS/17-18/169 Changes to process for postgraduate taught course approval**
The Dean referred to concerns with the length of time needed for a postgraduate course proposal to navigate the approval process and go live for recruitment. Together with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Academic Secretary he would be looking at the content of current course proposals to see if this could be streamlined. In preparation for that he made two proposals intended to immediately improve the process timeline. Firstly, he suggested that the external review of a course proposal take place *before* the course proposal comes to the GSC (rather than after GSC approval as is currently the case), and secondly that the AR would provisionally set up a course on the system as soon as it is approved by the GSC with the course then going live on the day after it is approved by Council. The Dean opened the floor for discussion on the two proposals and on any other ways in which members thought the process could be expedited without compromising academic quality.

Members generally supported the Dean's proposals, but raised some related issues. One concern was how to address a potential risk (if the proposal had not previously been approved by GSC) of a course proposal of sub-optimal academic quality being sent for external review. The Dean's view was that the School Executive would be one gate keeper of quality. He stated that the other would be the designated administrative officer in Academic Affairs in Trinity Teaching and Learning, Ewa Sadowska, who currently supports the development of postgraduate course proposals, and has been consistently reliable over the years in ensuring that proposals are developed to the highest quality, which has been invariably recognized by external reviewers. It was emphasized that the consideration of course proposals by GSC members *following external review* would still be essential to ensure that the merits of proposals were scrutinized outside the discipline to avoid undue partiality.

The Academic Secretary proposed an alternative approach of simultaneously sending the course proposal to the external examiner and submitting it to the GSC. This might be appropriate in some cases, but there would be merit also in allowing a proposal to go for review before it came to GSC; thus for example, courses could go out for external review over the summer and then be ready to be processed by GSC in September.

The Dean clarified that the current practice of the School to submit to him nominations of three externals would continue – even if the external evaluation occurred prior to GSC considering the course. He confirmed that he retains the right to reject the School nominations should the proposed candidates be too junior or

have too close links to Trinity staff. The Dean's objective would be to improve the approval process in such a way that all new courses would go live by mid Michaelmas Term to avail of a surge of non-EU applications normally coinciding with the period of November to January. The Dean undertook to discuss his second proposal with Peter Hynes, Head of Business Support and Planning in the AR, and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

It was agreed to implement the change immediately with the next course proposal coming on stream.

XX   **GS/17-18/170 Review of Provost's Project Award Scheme**
This item was a continuation of *Re:* GS/16-17/95. The Dean advised the committee that Trinity had recently advertised forty fully funded PhD positions across a wide variety of disciplines. He reminded members that when Council had approved the new Provost Project Scholarship awards, currently re-titled as "Provost's PhD Project Awards", it also recommended that the scheme be reviewed after a year. He stated that the forty scholarships had been chosen on a competitive basis from around two hundred project applications submitted by Principal Investigators (PIs), i.e. assistant and associate professors. Lessons had been learned in that applications were difficult to compare, assess and score against one another by the reviewing committee, whose members came from various disciplines, due to a discipline-specific technical way projects were described. The Dean mentioned that the members' identity was not made public to remove pressure. He further advised that a new application template would be designed to be used next year to better facilitate a more efficient selection of submitted projects. The idea of introducing a theme-based core of projects for next year was rejected as too restrictive and limiting academic freedom of research.

The advertised studentships would now fund PhD students attracted to work on the successful projects which need to be applied for online through SITS by 1 June. Applicants were advised to make contact directly with the successful PIs to have their suitability for the awards assessed before they apply.

In response to a query the Dean explained that, under the scheme, once a successful PI accepts an applicant that opening is immediately closed but that the official final date for applications would be June 1. This year, however, all forty positions would be kept open to enable College to create an impact in the first year of launching the new scheme in the press and on social media.

An issue was raised that the new awards favoured PIs with large labs who had additional funding already in place to fully support the recruited students in terms of, for example, lab consumables, and that there was a high risk that some early-career PIs without such established funds might not be in a position to support the recruited students throughout the four years on the PhD register. It was suggested that PIs should be asked to make a declaration on the application form to confirm that they could fully support the student.

In response to a query, the Dean outlined an aspirational timeframe for next year. The plan was to seek Council approval for the changes to the application stage of the scheme by May, to conclude the review process by the end of September, to complete the new recruitment process of PI projects with decisions going to Council in December, and to launch the annual scheme in early January 2019. Finally, the Dean clarified that, whereas the identity of the student who would be funded should be determined by the successful PI, equally the acceptance and registration of that student would be the same as every PhD student (that is, the School would sign off on the application and the official offer to the student would come from the Dean).

The Graduate Students' Union (GSU) President raised an issue of the remaining 1252 studentships not brought under the new award scheme. He stated that students in Schools where the 1252 awards were not available this year were very unhappy. The Dean explained that the 1252 awards had been distributed to faculty deans on the same 'pro-rata' basis as was the case in the previous years, that is, by reference to the number of PhDs from within a particular faculty which had been submitted, examined and approved by the University Council within the previous academic year. It followed that in some faculties there would be fewer awards than there were schools. The GSU President stated that such a situation perpetuated the disadvantage of small Schools which could not increase their PhD numbers due to a lack of awards resulting from the small number of PhD students. The GSU President's concern was shared by members of the committee.

In response to another query, the Dean clarified that timewise next year the AR should be advising the faculties in early January of the number of 1252 awards they had been allocated for the year. It was the prerogative of each faculty dean to determine the basis of internal allocation of these awards to Schools. The Dean concluded that ideally it would be great to have more dedicated external PhD scholarships in every School to ensure that all students were adequately funded.

The Dean concluded that he would appreciate if members could source feedback from their School Executives to do with changes in relation to the application procedure for the "Provost's PhD Project Awards" next year and bring it to the next GSC meeting which would have this item on the agenda. It was also suggested that he seek the view of Schools as to whether it might be fairest simply to allocate 1 1252 award to every School rather than to distribute them to faculty deans.

XX **GS/17-18/171 Proposal for a mandatory module on the structured PhD programme**
The Dean raised a concept of a new 5 ECTS structured PhD module on *Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era* to be made mandatory for all incoming PhD students from next year. He explained that the module would address the importance of research ethics in the context of open research, the danger of research plagiarism and the necessity to comply with the demands of best research practice as promoted by Trinity's LERU partners. Training in research integrity is increasingly viewed as mandatory for staff and students seeking grants by funding bodies across the full range of sciences and humanities. The Dean was currently exploring with Niamh Brennan from the Library the development of such a module, to

also cover the new data protection legislation, data management plans and how to ensure research impact in an open scholarship era. The availability of the module would be enhanced by the AR new facility in SITS which would allow students to register on stand-alone PhD modules from September. The Dean of Research clarified that the availability of the new module would be at no cost to Schools for the moment. She flagged that staff would also be obliged to complete the new training in order to fulfil a contractual obligation for grant holders and their teams towards their funders.

The meeting was in favour to make the module mandatory. The Dean undertook to bring the module descriptor to the next meeting.

GS/17-18/172 Revised External Examiners Policy
The Dean invited the Director of Academic Affairs to speak to his circulated memo. Dr O'Neill noted that the External Examiners' Policy, approved by Council in June 2015, had been revised in response to requests from Schools seeking clarification on the College position in respect of remote attendance by external examiners at Courts of Examiners. Committee members were invited to review the proposed amendments to the Policy in respect of sections 4.3 Scope of the Policy, 7.6 Remote Attendance by External Examiners and 9.8 Related Documents. The committee approved the proposed changes to the policy noting that they would normally affect the supplemental and interim postgraduate courts of examiners. The revised policy would be recommended to the University Council for approval and subsequently uploaded on the Academic Policies webpage on the Trinity Teaching & Learning website, to replace the current External Examiners Policy.

XX   GS/17-18/173 AOB
(i)   The Academic Secretary advised that Trinity Teaching and Learning while surveying existing policies in preparation for the institutional review in 2021, noticed a gap in terms of a specific policy to cover issues arising in situations where a PhD student was funded by a grant vesting in a PI (who is also the student's supervisor). In the case of a breakdown of student/supervisor relations in such a situation, it might be impossible, after all, for the student simply to transfer to a new supervisor. The Dean undertook to set up a working group to consider the issue and come up with a draft policy.
(ii)   In response to a query, the Dean suggested that an issue of PhD by publication at a discipline level would be put on the agenda of the next GSC.
(iii)   The Dean advised that Trinity would be nominating five students to the LERU doctoral summer school. It was hoped that Trinity would secure one place in the school, though last year it had secured three. Results of the LERU selection process should be available towards the end of April.

XX   Section B for noting and approval
GS/17-18/174 Stand-alone PhD module in "Core Biomedical Research Skills" from the School of Biochemistry and Immunology
The committee approved this new stand-alone 10 ECTS module for Trinity-registered PhD students and staff to be delivered from 2018/19.

GS/17-18/175 Stand-alone PhD module in "Key Skills for Biomedical Research" – School of Medicine

The committee approved this new stand-alone 5 ECTS module for PhD students in School of Medicine to commence in 2018/2019 in Semester 2.

GS/17-18/176 Calendar 3 change 2018/19: A new optional module "Trauma in Translation: Representations, Rewritings, Adaptations" on MPhil in Literary Translation – School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies

The committee approved this new optional 10 ECTS module to be delivered from 2018/19, and a resulting Calendar 3 change to the course entry for 2018/19.

GS/17-18/177 Calendar 3 change 2018/19: MSc/ PGrad Dip/PGradCert in Nursing - Child Health and Wellbeing – School of Nursing and Midwifery

The committee approved the following revisions to the course, and a resulting Calendar 3 change to the course entry for 2018/19: (i) the introduction of a new entry point to one year Postgraduate Certificate (30 ECTS) and exit award of Postgraduate Certificate (30 ECTS) accompanied by a new entry point to one year Postgraduate Diploma level top up of 30 ECTS (with an existing exit award) for possible re-admission to the Masters course top up of another 30 ECTS at a later stage; and (ii) a new entry point to one year part time MSc top up (with an existing award) (worth 30 ECTS credits) for holders of a Postgraduate Diploma. This bottom up structure would make the MSc a 3 year part time course. The committee also approved the retention of the current top down direct entry point to 2 year part time MSc and one year full time MSc (worth 90 ECTS credits) (leading to an existing MSc award permitting an existing exit award of Postgraduate Diploma) (worth 60 ECTS credits), and changes to progression resulting from the introduction of the new postgraduate certificate entry and exit point. It was noted that the School intended to retain both the one-year full-time and two-year part-time format of delivery of the direct entry Masters course and to retain the Postgraduate Diploma award exit point after year 1.

GS/17-18/178 Calendar 3 change 2018/19: MSc/ PGrad Dip/PGradCert in Community Health - School of Nursing and Midwifery

The committee approved the following revisions to the course, and a resulting Calendar 3 change to the course entry for 2018/19: (i) The introduction of a new entry point to one year Postgraduate Certificate (30 ECTS) and exit award of Postgraduate Certificate (30 ECTS) accompanied by a new entry point to one year Postgraduate Diploma level top up of 30 ECTS (with an existing exit award) for possible re-admission to the Masters course top up at a later stage, and (ii) a new entry point to one year part time MSc top up (with an existing award) (worth 30 ECTS credits) for holders of a Postgraduate Diploma. This bottom up structure would make the MSc a 3 year part time course. The committee also approved the retention of the current top down direct entry point to 2 year part time MSc and one year full time MSc (worth 90 ECTS credits) (leading to an existing MSc award permitting an existing exit award of Postgraduate Diploma) (worth 60 ECTS credits), changes to progression resulting from the introduction of the new postgraduate certificate entry and exit point, and a brand new 10 ECTS module "Clinical Practicum Community Health" which would be optional for NMBI-registered nurses

and midwives only, and additional two optional 10 ECTS modules ("Deconstructing Mental Health and Distress" and "Child Health Provision in the Community") already delivered on other Masters courses in the School.

GS/17-18/179 Calendar 3 change for 2018/19: Revision of Masters in Development Practice MSc/PGradDip. (exit award) (120ECTS/60ECTS)
The committee approved discontinuation of the joint TCD-UCD delivery of the Masters in Development Practice for new entrants to the course from 2018/19, and a change of course title to Development Practice (MSc/PGradDip). The joint degree award by the University of Dublin and the University College Dublin: MSc/PGradDip (exit only) (120ECTS/60ECTS) will cease following completion of the course by the current student cohort in August 2019. This joint degree award will be replaced with a single degree award of MSc/PGradDip (exit only) (120ECTS/60ECTS) by the University of Dublin, Trinity College Dublin for students entering the revised Masters course in September 2018. For new entrants in 2018/19 all modules will be coordinated and delivered by Trinity. Duration of the revised MSc course is 2 years full-time. Existing students on the joint course will complete their studies under the existing joint delivery mode until August 2019.

Section C for noting
GS/17-18/180 The committee noted Minutes of the Royal Irish Academy of Music Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM ACDC) of 1 November 2017.

GS/17-18/181 The committee noted Draft Minutes of the Marino Institute of Education, Associated College Degrees Committee (MIE ACDC) of 14 February 2018 and supported (i) the introduction of 1 year full time delivery format from 2018/19 of Professional Diploma in Education (Further Education) (ProfDip (FE)), (ii) the amendments to the common module "Introduction to Education Studies" from 2018/19 shared by three Masters in Education Studies courses (MES) in MIE (Inquiry Based Learning, Visual Arts, and Leadership in Christian Education), and (iii) the introduction of a new Module 4 "Promoting Inquiry-Based Learning through the use of creative technologies" for MES (Inquiry-Based Learning) from 2018/19.

GS/17-18/182 The committee noted Careers Advisory Service, Career Management System - steering group notes from 8th December, 2017.

GS/17-18/183 The committee noted the HEA Higher Education Factsheet on postgraduate research.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.55am.

Prof. Neville Cox   Date: 22 March 2018