



GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9am on Thursday 17 May 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 Sinéad Roden, Trinity Business School
Professor Paula Quigley, School of Creative Arts
Professor John Walsh, School of Education
Professor Philip Coleman, School of English
Professor Eunan O'Halpin, School of Histories & Humanities
Professor Justin Doherty, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
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 John Gilmer, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Mauro Ferreira, School of Physics
Professor Jean Quigley, School of Psychology
Professor David Shepherd, Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
Professor Thomas Chadeaux, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Professor Virpi Timonen, School of Social Work and Social Policy
- Mr Shane Collins, Graduate Students' Union President (Ex officio)
Mr Madhav Bhargav, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (Ex officio)
Ms Helen O'Hara, Information Technology Services Representative (in attendance Ex officio)
Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer (Ex officio)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, CAPSL Representative (Ex officio)
Ms Ewa Sadowska (Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning), Secretary (Ex officio)
- Apologies:** Ms Helen Thornbury (Office of Dean of Graduate Studies) (Ex officio)



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

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Dónall Mac Dónaill, School of Chemistry
Professor Owen Conlan, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Michael O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Richard Reilly, School of Engineering
Professor Seamus Joseph Martin, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Deirdre Ahern, School of Law
Professor Andreea Nicoara, School of Mathematics

Vacant: Director of Academic Affairs, TT&L (in attendance)

In attendance:

Professor Suzanne Dennan (School of Medicine) for item GS/17-18/197

Peter Hynes, Head of Business Support & Planning (Academic Registry) for item GS/17-18/198

Marie McPeak, Education Support Officer (Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning) for item GS/17-18/199

GS/17-18/195 Minutes of 19th April 2018

The minutes were approved as circulated.

GS/17-18/196 Matters Arising

Re: GS/17-18/173 AOB (iii): The Dean advised that an offer of one place for a doctoral student from genetics, Carol O'Brien, had been received to attend the prestigious LERU summer school in 2018.

Re: GS/17-18/186 A new interdisciplinary course proposal: MPhil in Medieval Studies: The Dean advised that the proposer had been working on a constructive report from the external reviewer with a view to submitting the proposal to the next Council.

Re: GS/17-18/188 Careers Advisory Service Annual Report 2016/17 and First Destination Statistics of 2016 Class: The Graduate Students' Union President emphasised the need to also survey students who had not completed their courses or research degrees to ascertain the reasons behind their lack of academic success. The Academic Secretary noted that the issue had already been raised at Council where the Director of Student Services had undertaken to carry out such a survey. The Dean undertook to liaise with the new Director when appointed, and to bring feedback to the committee.

Re: GS/17-18/189 PhD by publication: The Dean advised that the issue would be discussed by a working group with a view to having its recommendations brought to a committee meeting the following year.



Re: GS/17-18/192 Polythea operational framework: The Dean advised that Council had approved the operational framework at its last meeting. He thanked the Academic Secretary and the Registrar for their contribution to the framework, and acknowledged with gratitude the work of Ewa Sadowska on the document. He noted that the framework would work as a model for logistical arrangements for future European Joint Doctorate programmes.

Re: GS/17-18/193 Structured PhD module in “Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era”: The Dean advised that Council had approved the mandatory module at its last meeting.

XX GS/17-18/197 A new MSc course proposal in Diagnostic Radiography from the School of Medicine

The Dean welcomed Prof. Suzanne Dennan (School of Medicine), a prospective course director. The Dean confirmed that Council at its last meeting approved via the April minutes a recommendation from the last Graduate Studies Committee (GS/17-18/186) permitting a modification on the revised approval procedure allowing for simultaneous progression of the proposal along the committee and the external reviewer’s routes to expedite the process. In line with that modification, the course proposal had just been sent out to an external reviewer and in parallel the course proposer had been invited to present the course submission to the committee.

The Dean outlined the rationale of the proposed course by explaining that it was intended as an accelerated programme of study, worth 120 ECTS, to train diagnostic radiographers over two full years – and in the context of a national shortage of diagnostic radiographers. The entry requirement was at graduate level. Prospective students would be graduates primarily with a science or healthcare-related undergraduate degree. Upon approval of the course proposal by Council, the course curriculum will be submitted to the CORU Radiographers Registration Board for national recognition of this diagnostic radiography qualification. The Dean noted that permission had been obtained for new posts to support the course.

Prof. Dennan noted that currently, there was a national shortage of diagnostic radiographers in Ireland. The number of radiographers graduating in Ireland (approximately 35 graduates in 2017) was not sufficient to provide diagnostic imaging services or to enable the future development of services. Nationally, many hospitals were experiencing high radiographer vacancy levels (20% - 50%). The shortage of radiographers was seriously affecting the ability of hospitals to provide timely access to diagnostic imaging tests. There was an urgent requirement to train more diagnostic radiographers in Ireland to support diagnostic imaging services, and the new course had been put on in response to that need to provide high quality academic education and practical training to enable graduates to practice safely and independently as diagnostic radiographers. The programme would equip diagnostic radiography graduates with the necessary technical and professional skills required to meet the demands of a constantly evolving profession.

Prof. Dennan took questions from the floor. She clarified that UCD was offering the only programme to train radiographers in Ireland which was at undergraduate level.



Recruitment of staff from overseas was resorted to in order to reduce the shortage of radiographers country-wide. In response to a query, Prof. Dennan clarified that one module within each year could be compensated for progression purposes, and undertook to amend the proposal accordingly to make the regulation clear. The Calendar entry in the proposal would also need to reflect that regulation, and in addition a reference to supplemental examinations. Prof. Dennan confirmed that the Masters course did not have an exit postgraduate diploma award because the nature of the programme would render this impracticable.

The committee recommended the new course proposal to Council pending a favourable external report.

XX GS/17-18/198 Changes to course setup/modular registration for Structured PhD Modules

The Dean welcomed Peter Hynes, Head of Business Support & Planning, Academic Registry (AR). The Head of Business Support & Planning explained that the AR was putting a lot of time and effort into a project aimed at setting up PhD students on structured modules in SITS. The project would ensure that all structured PhD modules (those that are part of taught Masters courses; those that are PhD-specific School-based modules; those that are hosted by non-academic areas such as the Careers, TAP, CAPSL, Science Gallery, Library, and those that Trinity students could take in one of the other six Irish Universities) would be coded to the PhD candidates' record. Modules not attached to a School would be associated with the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies to facilitate registration in SITS.

The project comprised three phases. Firstly, the AR was identifying the credit bearing modules delivered by non-academic areas in College and modules offered by outside institutions. Secondly, the AR was setting up the architectural structure for the modules in SITS. New Faculty/School structures would need to be set up in SITS to facilitate the modules from non-academic areas to ensure they had the same architecture as academic modules. Thirdly, the AR would be looking at the process of how Schools would assign modules to PhD students through CMIS to ensure that those modules were accurately assigned and recorded against registered students. The project was in the planning stage at present, and the AR would be working closely with the Dean and Schools to roll out the process in the coming months.

In a discussion which followed a number of issues were raised and clarifications offered:

- i) Implications for progression: should a student not pass a structured module, they can enrol on another (or, should they choose, could repeat that module); from a university perspective, only the mandatory module on research ethics must be retaken if failed; modules in SITS will be set up on a Pass/Fail basis; students would be able to withdraw half way through the module and enrol on another without penalty as only modules successfully completed would be recorded;
- ii) Academic flexibility: Schools may set up "broad" modules in SITS in order to capture School-linked "internships", "placements", "summer schools" or arrangements to address individual students' particular needs by seeking



- their approval directly from the Dean bypassing the Graduate Studies Committee;
- iii) Visibility: by having structured modules in SITS, Schools would see taught components as part of students' academic life cycle; modules from non-academic areas linked to their students would enable Schools transfers of FTEs for module delivery;
 - iv) Reporting facility: including the structured modules in SITS would enable generating detailed reports, including satisfying the HEA requirements, on student numbers registered on individual modules and associated statistics of completion and delivery.

The Head of Business Support & Planning clarified that the aim was to commence registering students in September 2018 without retroactivity. Enrolment deadlines would vary in Schools, and the AR was working with Schools to determine same.

A concern was expressed about the lack of a College-issued Diploma Supplement (DS). The Graduate Students' Union President noted that when Trinity graduates applying to European universities needed to submit a DS from Trinity, they were being accommodated by a DS issued at School-level. Unfortunately, the practice had resulted in a diversity in format and information detail of the document across College. The Dean undertook to liaise with the Graduate Students' Union President over the summer to examine the issue and report back to the committee on rectification measures in due course.

The Head of Business Support & Planning also reported to the committee on measures to be put in place to expediate opening up new courses in SITS for recruitment. He explained that setting up courses in SITS was a complex process that involved teams across the AR and IT Services. His team in the AR was heavily involved in the process and had a role in ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the set-up of the courses to make sure they were fully compliant with the course proposal documentation. The AR recognised the importance of new courses being open to applicants as soon as possible after Council approval, and therefore a new target was set up to have that process concluded within 2 weeks after the respective Council meeting. To ensure that new timeline was met, the AR would be commencing the set-up of the course architecture on approval from the GSC rather than Council. As the set-up of courses in SITS involves multiple staff across teams, the Head of Business Support & Planning would be working with the GSC Secretary to review over the summer the core information contained in the course proposal template to ensure that this critical information was presented up front on the covering page of the proposal. The aim was to ensure consistency of interpretation and ease of access to key information required by the AR teams. All changes to course e.g. part-time version, new intake, required the same set up as for a new course, so it was vital that the same level of detail would be presented on the covering page to facilitate that.

The Dean advised members that time-wise to maximise all logistical opportunities ideally all new course proposals should be developed over the summer with a view



to being presented to the Graduate Studies Committee and Council in Michaelmas Term and open to applicants early in Hilary Term.

The Dean noted with gratitude that although the AR was currently prioritising the Trinity Education Project (TEP), the Head of Business Support & Planning found the time to come to the committee to address the two issues and, more generally, that AR had found the time to work on such an important project within the postgraduate space. The committee thanked the Head of Business Support & Planning for attending the meeting.

GS/17-18/199 Programme Handbook policy

The Dean welcomed Marie McPeak (Education Support Officer, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning) who spoke to the circulated policy taken as read.

The Education Support Officer noted that the policy aims to standardise handbook content and access for taught programmes across Trinity, and that it reflects existing practice within College and good practice in handbook policies from other Universities. The Policy acknowledges the vital role of handbooks in communicating key information to students across College; and accounts for flexibility whether the handbook is at programme, year or subject-level. The Appendix brings accessibility and visual identity guidelines and the requirements of the College VLE Policy, into one central resource, and should be updated annually, together with the handbook, to reflect changes to policy and requirements. A Calendar entry is proposed to support the policy and will be included in the General Regulations Part II and Part III. The policy has been previously circulated to the USC in April and May, with feedback on the April iteration, incorporated in the version circulated, on issues relating to the publication of the Calendar and changes to the handbook after publication. The GSC was invited to consider and approve the policy and the Appendix and endorse the proposed Calendar entry. Once approved by the University Council, the policy will be published on the Academic Policies webpage on the Trinity Teaching & Learning Website.

In a discussion which followed a few issues were raised. For example, the Education Support Officer clarified that the handbook could be personalised for individual programmes and must be made available on the Friday before the programmes start, usually the last Friday of August. (Section 7.3) The Graduate Students' Union President noted that handbooks should be available for the Postgraduate Orientation Week commencing on Monday 27 August 2018. A reference to Foundation Scholarships (Appendix 1 p.9) was deemed unnecessary for postgraduate booklets. With respect to Section 8 of the policy requiring that "Directors of Teaching and Learning, or their nominees, will ensure the accuracy of programme handbook information and that the policy is implemented at local level", it was agreed to insert a statement stipulating that course coordinators/directors submit their handbooks to DTLPs in a timely manner. It was also agreed to insert an explicit requirement that both the handbook and the Appendix be updated annually. An issue of mandatory consistency of the handbook with the Calendar and College academic policies arose with respect to Section 5. The Academic Secretary stated that handbooks would have to be accurate as they were a vital source of information for students. It was



also suggested that in Section 6.2 a word “coherent” be inserted into the definition of a programme as a collection of modules.

It has been proposed that the handbook policy be implemented starting 2019-2020 as some handbooks would need to be much expanded to comply with the new policy, students be referred to the Calendar already online for general rules, and information on locations be limited. DTLPGs should be given the latitude to include or not include some of the listed information. The policy should differentiate between the information crucial to an undergraduate programme against that essential for a postgraduate one as the latter enrolls much more mature students able to find some of the information by themselves.

The Education Support Officer clarified that in creating the policy, it was hoped to avoid a situation where handbooks were cumbersome, but the policy also aimed to ensure that students would have relevant information at their fingertips. The policy offered flexibility in that programmes would choose to signpost to where detailed information on some topics could be found and to decide what was relevant to students. The Education Support Officer reassured members what while reviewing the policy based on feedback received wording would be improved to ensure the overall clarity of details.

The Dean thanked the Education Support Officer for her concise and thorough presentation of the policy. The committee endorsed the policy and the Calendar entry subject to indicated changes.

XX GS/17-18/200 Provost’s Project Awards

This item was a continuation of *Re: GS/17-18/190*. Firstly, the Dean addressed the issue of the allocation of 1252 awards the following year. He noted that he had contacted Faculty Deans to advise that the GSC had recommended that each School should be allocated one award. This would leave one award un-allocated. A discussion followed as to how that one award should be allocated. The Dean proposed that it could be allocated to the School with the highest number of PhD completions the previous year, or that it would go to a student in a particularly severe financial hardship determined by an *ad hoc* committee upon reviewing applications from Schools. An issue was raised as to whether this award should go to one new entrant for three years or to three continuing students in their 4th year for one year only. The latter option was favoured. The Dean of Research suggested that the 25th award could be allocated to the Library to support a PhD student to be recruited to carry out research on its collections. The Dean undertook to finalise the issue by direct emails with the DTLPGs.

Secondly, the Dean shared a set of proposals capturing possible changes to the Provost’s PhD Project Awards, some already discussed at the last meeting, such as the necessity to forward feedback to each applicant as a matter of course, to include three questions on the application form to be fleshed out in a lay language to ensure transparency for the selection purpose, and a modified way of allocating the awards. Re the latter change, the Dean clarified that some awards would be reserved to the Faculty with nominees to be selected by a special faculty-based committee, and the



rests to PIs. The nomination panel would consist of three readers going up to four readers for the FEMS Faculty. It was emphasised that applications should ensure that readers could understand comparative merits of individual submissions across the disciplines within the faculty to make informed choices to award funding to some projects rather than others. An important issue would be to ensure that disciplines were adequately represented on selection panels.

GS/17-18/201 Graduate Studies Committee self-evaluation survey 2017/18

The Dean reminded members that the annual self-evaluation was a requirement for each principal Committee in College and invited them to complete this year's online survey of the Graduate Studies Committee by 1st July.

XX GS/17-18/202 AOB

- (i) The School of Medicine was seeking approval for a Calendar 3 entry 2018/19 for a stand-alone Postgraduate Diploma course in Healthcare Infection Management approved by Council via the GSC minutes of 27 March 2014 (CL/13-14/146). The committee endorsed the request.
- (ii) Because of the new academic year structure necessitated by the introduction of TEP, established deadlines for assignments on many PGT courses were brought forward disadvantaging postgraduate students. The Dean undertook to raise the issue with the Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer to obtain dispensation for PGT courses.
- (iii) An issue arose that the AR was requiring two academic references (as distinct from one academic and one professional reference), as a condition for issuing unconditional offers. The Dean undertook to clarify the matter with the AR that one academic and one professional reference was acceptable.
- (iv) A number of instances of PGT applicants with unconditional offers received as early as in January have been reported who have not received welcome packs from College to date. Similarly, many successful PhD applicants have not been issued with letters of offer preventing them from applying for the Irish visa. The concern was expressed that such applicants would be lost to College. The Dean undertook to issue letters of offer from his Office upon notification from Schools, and to liaise with the AR to clarify the process with a view to stipulating that official letters of offer should be issued within 2 weeks of unconditional offers being notified to applicants. It was noted that in some Schools welcome packs were being dealt with by local Global Officers.
- (v) The Graduate Students' Union President noted that students on postgraduate certificate courses were still not in a position to borrow books from the library as there was no decision made. The Dean undertook to look into the issue and report back to the committee.



- (vi) The Graduate Students' Union President noted that Board had discussed a revised approach to fees going forward at its recent meeting.
- (vii) The Dean notified members that he and other allegedly athletic Trinity staff and students would be taking part in the Wicklow 200 cycle event on a sponsored basis on 10 June to raise funds for the Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS) hardship fund for students in financial difficulties. The Dean was seeking participants in the event who could be sponsored and those who could organise similar events warranting sponsorship to raise monies to go to the PAS fund. The Dean invited members to publicise the opportunity, and promote it in the Schools.
- (viii) Finally, as this was the last meeting of the academic year, the Dean extended a huge thank you to all academic members for efficiently acting as DTLPs. He acknowledged with gratitude huge work involved, and reassured members that he noticed their commitment with unreserved appreciation. He especially thanked those members whose terms of office were coming to an end. He reserved special appreciation for the President and Vice President of the GSU who would move into 'retirement' in July. The Dean emphasized that it had been a huge pleasure working with all members throughout the year. In conclusion, he extended especial thanks to Ewa Sadowska, GSC Secretary, for brilliantly managing the GSC agenda and for her stellar work on course development across College, and to Helen Thornbury, from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies for her invaluable work in ensuring that the day to day operation of graduate education in the university proceeded smoothly.
- (ix) Provisional dates for GSC meetings in 2018/19 had been circulated and the committee reconfirmed preference to hold meeting from 10am to 12pm which would require changes to the circulated bookings.

XX Section B for noting and approval

GS/17-18/203 Stand-alone module for internal PhD students "English for Postgraduate Academic Purposes" from School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

The item was a continuation of GS/17-18/133. The committee approved the new 10 ECTS module for delivery from 2018/19 to all internal PhD students in Trinity.

GS/17-18/204 Permanent MSc course cessations from 2018/19 (School of Medicine)

The committee approved permanent MSc course cessations from 2018/19 of MSc in Respiratory Physiotherapy (FT-685 & PT-787), MSc in Cardiovascular Prevention & Rehabilitation (FT-782 & PT-783).

GS/17-18/205 Calendar 3 changes 2018/19: validated postgraduate courses

The committee approved Calendar part 3 changes for 2018/19 from the Marino Institute of Education and the Royal Irish Academy of Music.



GS/17-18/206 School Calendar 3 changes 2018/19 part 2

The committee approved Calendar part 3 changes for 2018/19 from the following Schools: Engineering, Languages, Literatures, Cultural Studies, Law, Natural Sciences, Nursing and Midwifery, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Social Sciences and Philosophy.

GS/17-18/207 Revision of the Dissertation requirement for the MSc Management cluster & Calendar 3 changes 2018/19

The committee noted a memo from Prof. Sinéad Roden DTLP, Trinity Business School. In September 2017, Dr Jim Quinn as DPGTL, received approval from the Graduate Studies Committee for the Business School's proposal to amend the dissertation (30 ECTS) requirement for the M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship (GS/17-18/126). Two new options are now available to students on the programme. The first option equips students, in teams, to complete a comprehensive business plan underpinned with theoretical rigor for a new entrepreneurial venture. The second option enables them to design and implement a scaling-up strategy for an existing small business (an in-company project). Both options require students to work actively on real-life projects, and to ground their work within the models, theories and frameworks studied in taught modules throughout their first two terms. Based on the successful integration of these options in the M.Sc Entrepreneurship, Trinity Business School had applied for similar revisions to four other Masters management programmes: MSc International Management, MSc Management, MSc Digital Marketing Strategy, and MSc Marketing.

The submitted proposal was seeking to extend the approval granted for revisions to the M.Sc. entrepreneurship project to a cluster of MSc management programmes, and was proposing a practice-orientated (company/industry) project as an option for students on these four programmes in two variants, i.e. as a Consulting Project, and as an Industry Analysis Project. The committee approved the proposed options to the Dissertation and the resulting Calendar 3 changes for each of the four courses from 2018/19.

In response to a query, Prof. Roden reassured members that all students would have direct relationships with their supervisors as part of the project set ups.

Section C for noting

GS/17-18/208 The committee noted a submission "Graduate Students' Union – Role within the College", and a memo from the GSU President, which clarified the role of the Graduate Students' Union within the College in the context of an increasing number of postgraduate students in recent years. The paper identified key areas including postgraduate representation in College Committees and the Graduate Students' Union Governance Structures. The Dean advised members to consider the submission in their Schools.

GS/17-18/209 The committee noted "Trinity Employability and Employer Guide" and a memo from Orla Bannon, Director of Careers). The Dean advised members to send direct feedback to the Director of Careers.



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

Prof. Neville Cox

Date: 17 May 2018