

## GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Item 1

Minutes of the meeting held in College Boardroom in Trinity Business School  
and online at 10am Thursday 23 March 2023

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**XX = Council relevance**

***Present (Ex officio):***

Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*)

*Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:*

Professor Laurent Muzellec, Trinity Business School

Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry

Professor Ivana Dusparic, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Paula Quigley, School of Creative Arts

Professor Ioannis Polyzois, School of Dental Science

Professor Noel Ó Murchadha, School of Education

Professor Sarah McCormack, School of Engineering

Professor Bernice Murphy, School of English

Professor Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics & Microbiology

Professor Ashley Clements, School of Histories & Humanities

Professor Jennifer Edmond, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies

Professor David Prendergast, School of Law

Professor Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics

Professor Catherine Darker, School of Medicine

Professor Cian O'Callaghan, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Mary Hughes, School of Nursing & Midwifery

Professor Carlos Medina Martin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Frédérique Vallieres, School of Psychology

Professor Gillian Wylie, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies

Professor Tara Mitchell, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy

Professor Erna O'Connor, School of Social Work & Social Policy

Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director, Tangent

Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services Representative

Ms Ewa Sadowska Administrative Officer (Academic Affairs, TT&L)

*In attendance for all items:*

Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, Head of Trinity

Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor's Office

Ms Leona Coady, Programme Director, Postgraduate Renewal Programme

Ms Sian Bradley, Administrative Officer, IT support

Mr Viktor Jelen, temporary nominated graduate student as GSC member

Ms Almudena Moreno Borrallo, temporary nominated graduate student as GSC member

*Not in attendance – Vacant:*

Graduate Students' Union President  
Graduate Students' Union Vice-President  
Director of Internationalisation, Trinity Global

*Apologies:*

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research  
Professor David Finlay, School of Biochemistry & Immunology  
Professor Kathleen McTiernan, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences  
Professor Hongzhou Zhang, School of Physics  
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience  
Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education, TT&L

*In attendance for individual items:*

Professor Emily Barnes, School of Education, for item GS/22-23/094  
Ms Rionnagh Sheridan, PG Renewal Coordinator & Analyst, for item GS/22-23/097  
Professor Rachel McLoughlin, PG Renewal WP#2 Lead and Ms Ewa Adach, PG Renewal Coordinator & Analyst, for item GS/22-23/098

The Dean welcomed Mr Viktor Jelen and Ms Almudena Moreno Borrallo, temporary nominated graduate students as GSC members in lieu of the Graduate Students' Union President and Vice-President whose roles are vacant pending re-engagement of Board with the Graduate Students' Union.

**XX Section A**

**XX GS/22-23/092 Minutes of GSC of 23 February 2023**

The minutes were approved as circulated with a correction of a typo on page 10.

**XX GS/22-23/093 Matters arising**

The Dean advised members that all actions from the previous meeting had been attended to. The Dean also noted that all GSC matters, including the revised process for managing external examiners, recommended at the February meeting on Agenda A and B were approved by the last Council. Some matters arising were covered in the Dean's memo circulated in advance of the meeting.

**XX GS/22-23/094 New course proposal: M.Ed. in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Education – Prof. Noel Ó Murchadha (School of Education DTLP) and Prof. Emily Barnes (School of Education) to present**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Emily Barnes from the School of Education. The Dean spoke to a slides presentation by way of introducing the proposal which has been developed in response to a successful tender from the Department of Education (DoE). The tender is due to last for 6 years from 2023/24 and cover five cohorts of 2-year part-time students, with a minimum intake of 20 EU students and a maximum of 30 students per cohort. The course student fees reflect the external funding support.

The new M.Ed. programme has two unique features as a result of tender requirements. Firstly, its credit volume is 100 ECTS. This is in response to the DoE's stipulation that students demonstrate not only competence in educational theory and practice, but also in Irish proficiency. As a consequence, the DoE mandates that students achieve CEFR Level C1 in Irish upon completion of the course to be eligible for the M.Ed. award regardless of their achievements on the other 90 ECTS of the M.Ed. An additional 10 ECTS module on Irish Language Proficiency has therefore been built into Year 2 increasing its credit volume to 40 ECTS. The Dean noted that this is not the only Masters programme in Trinity with more than 90 ECTS, but the introduction of an additional taught module and the implications performance on that module has for the overall award of the Masters degree is unique. The second bespoke provision for the proposed course is the introduction of an exit award of Postgraduate Certificate not normally permitted from a Masters course which is not framework-based.

The Dean opened the floor to questions but there were none. She thanked Prof. Emily Barnes and Prof. Noel Ó Murchadha for developing their course proposal in a very short time given that the successful tender result was only announced at the end of January. The committee recommended the proposal for Council.

**Decision GS/22-23/094:** The committee recommended for Council approval the new course proposal, 'M.Ed. in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Education' subject to an external review.

**XX GS/22-23/095 Dean of Graduate Studies' Annual Report for 2021/22 – Report and memo from Dean of Graduate Studies**

The Dean introduced her report with the caveat that the document is still a draft under development. She noted that the annual report is an opportunity, firstly, to look back at the achievements of the previous year, and secondly, to present to Council an insight into considerable challenges and achievements within Graduate Studies overall during a period that was largely still dominated by the Covid pandemic.

The report reflects mostly, but not exclusively, on 2021/22 and is structured in 3 sections. The introduction sets out the interdependence of Graduate Studies with other service areas of the university illustrating a tight working interconnectedness that enables Graduate Studies to deliver on its brief. Section A is a commentary on some of the data from the Academic Registry Annual Report 2021/22. Selected aspects of the AR Report have been summarized in each section. The Dean underlined statistics in terms of admissions to PGT and PGR registers by Faculty. The figures slightly dipped for PGR in 2021/22, largely due to a drop in applications to the Faculty of Health Sciences. PGT applications and admissions increased relative to the previous year. The Dean noted that the EU - Non-EU ratio was 75% to 25%, and that more than half of all registrations were from Ireland; India replaced China as a Non-EU recruitment market for PGT students, and the UK did not feature in the top 5 countries of registrations in either PGR or PGT student cohorts.

The Dean drew members' attention to the practice of PGR registration in March amounting to 15% (63 students) of the PGR cohort last year. She expressed concern that March-registered entrants are at risk of being less integrated with the annual academic lifecycle in College. She proposed that additional measures be put in place to support March students to fit better in with Trinity's systems.

Section B reflects on the key projects achieved by the GSC and the Dean's Office in 2021/22. Some highlights included the award for excellence in research supervision, the survey of student teaching commitments, the approval of the PG Renewal programme structure and design, approval of a dozen new PGT course proposals and ten Microcredentials, removing the 18k income limit from the Calendar and setting up an induction session for new DTLPs. In relation to the survey of student teaching commitments to which 22 Schools responded, the Dean noted the concern raised in the report that information about the nature and extent of PGR student opportunities and responsibilities for teaching and learning is dispersed in various locations other than the School website, handbooks or within induction packs. She therefore suggested that teaching requirements be brought to one location clearly signposted to PGR students so that they can easily access them.

Unlike Sections A and B which look back to the previous year, Section C examines the current academic year and considers possible future trends and emerging issues. The Dean underlined that the role of DTLP has developed considerably over the years, and that she will advocate that it be fully recognized in a workload model. She also noted that the current proportion of PGR students at 7% is lower than in Trinity's comparator research-intensive universities. Trinity is the current leader in Ireland, by a small margin, but the Dean noted that the new technical universities are mandated by law to have at least 7% of PGR students within their student body. Retaining the current leadership position will necessitate enhanced stipends and putting in place a dedicated support structure around doctoral students such as a doctoral hub or centre. The Dean suggested that the time might have come to reflect whether the PGR cohort be thought of separately as unrelated to the PGT students in terms of dedicated space and accommodation. Pertaining to PGT space, the Dean noted that majority of courses recruited only around 5 to 10 students. Given the limited resources consideration might need to be given to rationalizing the current offerings to maximize the returns. She concluded by noting the ongoing difficulty of securing the student voice in discussions at various governance levels in College during the last two years and hoped that GSU-elected students reps be in place early the following year to share their perspective on issues under consideration by GSC.

The Dean requested feedback from members on her presentation which led to a discussion during which the following comments were made:

- (i) March-registered students are present in small numbers in many Schools. Schools are indeed concerned about accidentally overlooking them and some might even be prepared to phase the March registration out to streamline their PGR cohorts to the September entry whereas other Schools will be keen to retain that registration. The Dean reminded members that an orientation programme was recently introduced for March students including the ones based out of campus in St James's. One School decided internally against admitting March applicants due to the concern about that School's capacity to manage them. However, March PGR entrants are an important flow of new students for many Schools, and hence, a university-wide stance in favour or against mandatory continuation or discontinuation might not be a prudent way forward. Some March students actually intended to start in September and only moved to the March register when they did not secure a visa in time – without the March entry they would be lost to Trinity. Another factor behind the March registration is frequently linked to newly secured research funding that needs a student to start immediately to

meet the funding requirements. It was also noted that Marie-Curie research programmes start students around January. The Dean concluded that Schools are free to decide internally that they do not accept students in March, while those Schools accepting March registrations need to ensure that they put in place adequate supports.

- (ii) In response to a query the Dean clarified that only a small proportion of students do not progress successfully to the PhD degree award. The success rate of 90% to 93% has been very stable for the last few years. Last year witnessed a slight increase of degrees awarded for the thesis “as is” and a corresponding slight decrease in the “Minor Corrections” (MC) category. In terms of examiners’ reports, there is little uniformity of requirements under the MC category, which may extend from a request for additional punctuation to multiple pages of comments requiring revisions such as re-working chapters and re-analysing data. The decision of the examiners to request MC versus “Major Revisions” (MR) is often based around their concern for the fee implication for the student. The Dean indicated that the currently ambiguous MC requirements vis-à-vis those pertaining to MR will be considered as part of the GSC workplan for the following year.

**Action GS/22-23/095:** Further feedback on the presented draft to be forwarded directly to the Dean.

**Decision GS/22-23/095:** The committee recommended the proposed version of the Annual Report without substantive changes for Council consideration.

**XX GS/22-23/096 PG Renewal: update by Ms Leona Coady, PG Renewal Programme Director**

Ms Leona Coady, PG renewal Programme Director gave a brief overview of recent PG Renewal developments illustrated on the circulated monthly slide. February was a busy month for Work Packages successfully delivering on their objectives. In terms of financial news, the new Trinity Research Doctorate Award and the proposal for addressing the EU and Non-EU fee differential were approved by Board in February and by the Finance Committee in early March. The latter project will be piloted from September 2023. The shift will move to teaching and learning costs aligning the university to the ministerial directive stipulating that from September 2023 all PGR students be paid directly and additionally for teaching and learning supports they provide.

The development of Business Case for Horizon 2 is progressing. The School Committees Roadshow programme has been presented to thirteen Schools with a further nine scheduled and one more to be scheduled. There was an in-person PGR Orientation meeting at Trinity Centre in St James’s in early March, and a successful half-day workshop was also held as part of the Research Supervision Development Programme.

The following items are under review and proposals are expected to be brought to GSC in April or May: PGR student assessment/progress requirements; thesis committee and viva guidelines; guidelines on learning supports provided by PGR students; benchmarking best practices for cyclical review of PGT programmes; new PGT programme development; Triple I (analysis in progress). The following items, on student and staff experience are expected to be brought to GSC in May: Benchmarking best practice for conflict management in supervisory relationship; opportunities to

integrate adjunct staff into the academic community; alignment with Academic Integrity initiative. There are also detailed project plans being developed for WP#3 and WP#5. There is a live pilot for the online application form already used for the Microcredentials, and the next steps are being assessed for PGT and PGR rollout. An approach has been agreed on for Horizon 2 in terms of sizing and costing integration of the Board-approved PGR-related new financial measures in SITS in readiness for September 2023.

The Dean thanked the PG renewal Programme Director and proceeded to speak to a slides presentation on possible distribution of the new PGR Doctoral awards for 2023/24 which is minuted below under AOB Item 10(i).

**XX GS/22-23/097 PG Renewal: recommendations for PGT research model framework – proposal and memo from Prof. Ashley Clements (WP#1 Lead, PGT) to present; Rionnagh Sheridan (PG Renewal Coordinator & Analyst) in attendance**

The Dean referred members to the circulated memorandum from Profs Ashley Clements and Richard Reilly, WP#1 Co-Leads, which puts forward a proposal for a PGT research model framework that aims to position Trinity in line with the most innovative research environments internationally. Having evaluated the current College practice (showing a variety of research output formats other than dissertation) and postgraduate taught research models in four comparator LERU universities, and the Code of Practice for PGT Research Governance and the Dissertation Framework in King's College London, and holding a recent consultation meeting with PGT students keen to secure a greater range of research output formats, the Work Package #1 team proposed the following recommendations:

- i) A model structure for PGT Research, which recognizes five possible formats for the PGT research element, namely Dissertation, Performance, Digital Artefact, Portfolio and Practice, each employing the pertinent methodology. A single PGT course may accommodate more than one research output format depending on appropriate disciplinary research methodologies.
- ii) A new institutional maximum 15,000 word count for the dissertation option of these alternatives based on 30 ECTS.
- iii) That assessment rubrics are mandatory in relevant student-facing programme information such as handbooks or webpages, to guide students on how their research will be graded.
- iv) That a review of eligibility criteria for PGT dissertation supervision will take place in Horizon 2 to remove the current gap in guidance in the Calendar.

After the presentation a discussion followed during which the following comments were made:

- a) A suggestion was made that the dissertation format be diversified as a research paper, a portfolio or a collection of papers or even studies emerging from another activity e.g., an exhibition to ensure flexibility beyond the one format. All the proposed five output categories have potential for adjusting the design output within them subject to ensuring that the chosen way forward is appropriate to the discipline.
- b) A number of Schools in the Faculty of AHSS have a pass mark of 40% for dissertations and would not be keen to move up to 50%. The WP Lead clarified that initially their intention was to raise the pass mark to 50% in order to align Trinity with the dominant practice in competitor universities but that was abandoned after realisation that such a step would fail

- to recognise the pedagogical decision that drives the allocation of specific mark bands.
- c) There was no response to the Dean’s question whether any of the proposed five options would not be sufficiently broad. The WP Lead has undertaken to consider any further feedback in order to finesse the proposed models to ensure flexibility.
  - d) A member suggested that publications should not be called “journals” but pieces of work potentially eligible for peer review and formatted accordingly.
  - e) Some Schools run doctoral programmes (such as D.Ed.) which are a mixture of research and teaching but technically classified as a research programme and the proposed PGT alternative research output models should be extended to these programmes. It was noted that this was not part of the specific scope of this piece of work but might be considered in Horizon 2.
  - f) Some Schools (like Engineering and Computer Science and Statistics) are trying to significantly grow PGT student numbers in response to College-set targets but are encountering bottle necks in supervision. Some Schools are accredited to professional bodies, such as Engineers Ireland, for validation which is also a consideration. Schools are considering how to change the assessment format of the final research project on the Masters courses. The Dean noted that the proposed five models for research output format should ensure flexibility and asked the DTLP from the School of Engineering considering the removal of the research element from their Masters to liaise with her. Some of these challenges could be folded into the upcoming discussion on eligibility to supervise.
  - g) In response to a query how the maximum word count of 15,000 was arrived at, the WP Lead explained that it resulted from scaling back from the 100,000 words for a standard PhD requirement. The currently dominant 20,000 word “humanities” dissertation format appears to result in is an output which is unpublishable due to its length i.e., too long for an article, too short for a research piece or a book. Scaling back to the proposed 15,000 maximum word count could ensure a transferable usage of a research output of a publishable quality. The proposed new maximum word count should even be shorter amounting to 11,000 words modelling back on the ECTS volumes.
  - h) Members noted that the proposed five models are fit for purpose and sufficiently flexible for each School to make use of them.
  - i) In response to a query whether an internship report is included in the proposed model, the WP Lead advised that it could be included, provided that the focus is on research activities – the nature of the evidence must be transparently linked to the learning outcomes related to research competence in a Level 9 qualification.
  - j) It was proposed that final models include group projects with individual components under single supervision. A portfolio or a digital arts output might lend itself as a group project in which individual components are contributed by individual students for a collective project.
  - k) On the Masters in High Performance Computing there is often a tension between a requirement to complete a research project and the assessment aimed at evidencing that students have acquired the relevant IT skills. Students are asked to produce a report on how they use the infrastructure and what problems can be mapped to the infrastructure so that it performs accurately which does not necessarily constitute research in the proper “narrow” sense. The Dean clarified that there is a requirement from QQI that NFQ level 9 Masters programmes must ensure that students demonstrate research skills. The issue is finding a mechanism to demonstrate that. A Masters course has to have that research dimension to

ensure that Trinity is in line with QQI requirements on all its programmes. A report has to evidence that learning outcomes of research competency have been achieved, in line with the move to ensuring a focus on learning outcomes rather than format of submission.

- I) The School of Medicine find practice-based projects useful. Students on many professional programmes in the School work in clinical practice alongside completing their Masters training, and therefore carrying out a full clinical audit cycle is of practical use to the student as a clinical skill. Research when broadly defined can cover competencies such as clinical audit and programme evaluation which enable the student to obtain utility when completing these tasks. Being able to put those skills forward “for” the dissertation is the way the School would like to proceed.

The Dean thanked all for their feedback. Members indicated that they support the proposed models for further discussion at Council.

**Action GS/22-23/097:** Further feedback on the presented options to be forwarded directly to the WP Lead to be considered for the final version for Council.

**Decision GS/22-23/097:** Members supported the proposed models for further discussion at Council.

**XX GS/22-23/098 PG Renewal: roles and responsibilities of supervisor and university in supporting students’ development of a multi-dimensional skillset – report and memo from Prof. Rachel McLoughlin (WP#2 Lead, PG Research Student Activities) to present; Ms Ewa Adach (PG Renewal Coordinator & Analyst) in attendance**

The Dean referred members to the circulated draft report from Prof. Rachel Mc Loughlin, Work Package #2 Lead which reviews the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and university in supporting PGR students’ development of a multidimensional skillset in line with Trinity’s research strategic plan to provide students with a more holistic training across disciplines. The report was based on an analysis of the data from the College-wide PGR survey conducted last year supplemented by the Research and Career Preparation Framework issued by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and the UK’s Vitae Researcher Development Framework. In the context of benchmarking nationally and internationally, consultations have also taken place with members of WP#4, #5 and #6 and representatives of the PGR community.

The report identified the three-pronged interdependence between the PGR student, the supervisor and the university in supporting PGR students to develop a multidimensional skillset. The supervisor’s role is to enable, facilitate and encourage students towards taking responsibility themselves for identifying their needs. The university’s role is to provide access to the resources. The report identified that despite there already being a diverse portfolio of resources in support of students’ personal and professional development, the information on, access to, and experience of these services is inconsistent and uneven across Disciplines, Schools, and Faculties. Addressing key gaps in information, access, and experience and scaling up the current resources should accelerate the development of multidimensional skill sets of PGR students to enable them to excel in their research areas and chosen career paths.



The following recommendations were discussed aiming at addressing key deficiencies in current practice:

1. Provision of guidelines for professional development planning (PDP) for PGR students.
2. Provision of an online centralised doctoral skills development hub – the idea clearly articulated during direct engagements with PGR students - where all resources could be found. Members noted that currently information is often inaccessible to students and supervisors. The Dean underlined the usefulness of a comprehensive list of current College resources, included for transparency in the report which are otherwise dispersed and not easily visible to students.
3. Implementation of PDPs. These plans will be worked out at the start of students' PhD based on self-assessment of individual needs and discussed with their thesis committee in the annual meetings and reported back upon achievement of goals. The aim is for students to be able to map out their journey through the research programme adding in additional skills to achieve along the way.
4. Development of customised training courses to address identified training gaps.
5. Review of the current Planning and Managing Your Research Process (PMRP) module to ensure that it is taken by more PGR students.

The Dean opened the floor for discussion and the following comments were made:

- 1) The WP Lead noted that in her recent engagement meeting with PGR students, students emphasized the need for College to provide better resources to support their well-being and mental health.
- 2) Members supported the suggestion for a central hub which would for example ensure that information on structured PhD modules becomes circulated to students in a timely manner at the beginning of the academic year.
- 3) A concern has been expressed that PGR students are being asked to fit in ever more additional training, such as going on placements, during the prescribed 4 years on the PhD register. Should the personal development be made mandatory, it will further reduce the time for research. The WP Lead confirmed that the pressure remains to ensure that PhD students complete their degree within four years, but the additional aim is not to introduce another burden for students but streamline their personal development endeavors to achieve additional skills. Supervisors will have to make room for and support that endeavor to progress seamlessly alongside the research track. The Dean commented that there are two equally important outcomes from the PhD i.e., the research and the development of the researcher, and the current discussion is around the researcher and their enhanced skills set to prepare students better for their careers.

The Dean thanked the WP Team for their work on the report looking forward to the implementation of its recommendations. Members confirmed their support for the report to be considered by Council.

**Decision GS/22-23/098:** The WP#2 report on roles and responsibilities of supervisor and university in supporting students' development of a multi-dimensional skillset is to progress for Council consideration.

**XX GS/22-23/099 PG Renewal: academic appeals position paper – Memo from Ms Breda Walls**

**(Director of Student Services and WP#5 Lead) and paper from Martin McAndrew (PG Student Support Officer) to present**

Continuing with PG Renewal items, the Dean referred members to the circulated position paper on academic appeals from Ms Breda Walls, Work Package #5 (Student Experience) Lead and Martin McAndrew, a member of the WP#5, and invited the latter to speak to it. The WP Team researched appeals systems in comparator LERU universities and at UCD and in Trinity where information can currently be inconsistent across the Calendar, PG handbooks and Course handbooks. PG students and Chairs of Courts of Appeal were also consulted in Trinity.

Based on the results of that research, Mr McAndrew confirmed that Trinity is broadly in line with the comparator universities. However, there are differences. In Trinity, academic appeals term refers to appeals brought by students mainly after they have failed supplementals. Another divergence is Trinity's use of the term "appeal" which can only mean a request to vacate the assessment result and to obtain permission for another sitting of the exam at the next opportunity. Unlike most of the comparator universities which have one centralised appeals system Trinity's is de-centralised to Schools operating their own local regulations. It is only via the escalation process that appeal cases go up for the Dean's consideration and finally end up in the Court of Academic Appeals.

Mr McAndrew noted that the number of appeals has increased in recent years (especially last year) together with an increase in the number of queries from students about possible appeals. Increasingly, students challenge marks, which indicates their escalating expectations that they should have been marked higher than they were. Similar to Trinity, the vast majority of comparator universities do not permit an appeal against the academic judgement of examiners. Trinity, however, differs in its approach to a determination that a student is "fit to sit" an exam, stipulating that once the student has attempted an assessment, they deemed themselves fit to do so and should be so assessed. Flexibility, such as deferring exams or changing the form of assessment, operates only up to the point of assessment, while other institutions allow students to submit information relating to extenuating circumstances impacting upon their performance after the assessment has been completed. Mr McAndrew concluded that while Trinity's appeal regulations are sometimes different to those in comparator universities, they are robust and based on strong principles of fairness to the student, and therefore there is no recommendation to change the rationale and the logic underpinning its current appeals system.

Finally, Mr McAndrew commented on the recommendations made to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the system for the student and as an administrative process.

1. Minimum timelines for appeals should be of at least ten working days between results being published in a School and the deadline for submission of an appeal to allow adequate time for file preparation.

2. The appeals process should be modified to remove or reduce, at least at the initial stage, the need for students to have to present their case in-person, often recounting personal and distressing circumstances, at the Court of Appeals. Some Schools already consider cases without students presenting in person. Given that many cases are taken on *ad misericordiam* grounds, it is difficult for the student to explain their distressing and sensitive predicament to a room of strangers. Court of Appeals members equally share in the students' discomfort.

3. Trinity's current approach towards appeals expressed in legalistic terminology should be

made more straightforward in the Calendar. A set of proposed changes (included as an appendix to the circulated position paper) aimed at achieving such a clarity is currently being considered by the Dean of Graduate Studies with a view to being considered at a further GSC meeting.

4. The appeals-related terminology should be more widely understood by Trinity staff, particularly by newer academics, and clarified in plain English to students. Accordingly, a concise information guide on appeals should be put together. Updates to Calendars, handbooks and information guides will likely be necessary, subject to future decisions by the GSC and Council.

The Dean thanked Mr McAndrew for his presentation. In a discussion which followed the following comments were made:

- (i) Mr McAndrew clarified that currently students are being advised by email circulations around the exam time that if they are feeling unwell on the day of an exam, they should not attempt the exam. Frequently, however, students attempt exams even if afterwards in an appeal case they claim they were feeling unwell.
- (ii) The Dean noted that the Calendar changes due to come in for the GSC meeting in April will clarify the existing information without any substantive revisions to the principles of the current appeals process.
- (iii) The Dean underlined that the most important issue now is to gauge from the Schools whether they will have capacity within their academic year structure to extend the turnaround window for bringing in appeals cases to ten working days. The Dean was uncertain that the proposed ten days would be feasible for all Schools.
- (iv) The Dean also requested feedback on the proposal to remove the current requirement of an in-person student attendance at the hearing to present their case.
- (v) Members endorsed the proposed removal of the current requirement of an in-person student attendance at hearing to present their case. The majority of cases are well documented and can be adjudicated without the student presence in the courtroom. However, some members were in favour of retaining the option for a student to personally tell their story. Some other members suggested to empower Chairs of Court to decide which cases should require student presence. The Dean suggested that this issue should be discussed further before it is articulated as a final recommendation for Council – hence it might not be immediately implementable even if approved. The committee recommended the proposed academic appeals position paper as a starting point for Council consideration.

**Action GS/22-23/099(i):** DTLPs to consult with their Schools about extending the turnaround period to ten days advising the Dean by email by the end of the following week of the maximum window that each School can put in place.

**Action GS/22-23/099(ii):** DTLPs to consult with their Schools about the proposed removal of the requirement for in-person student attendance to present their appeal case.

**Action GS/22-23/099(iii):** The suggestion to consider the in person presence of students in courts of appeal to be further discussed at a future GSC meeting.

**Decision GS/22-23/099:** The committee recommended the proposed academic appeals

position paper for Council consideration.

**XX GS/22-23/100 Academic Integrity Working Group 2022/23 – update from Dean of Graduate Studies**

The Dean advised she would circulate to the College community an Academic Integrity Working Group update later on that day. She referred members to AI resources recently developed by the Academic Practice and accessible via <https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/AcademicIntegrity/index.php>. She further noted that the National Academic Integrity Network is launching a series of webinars the following week.

**XX GS/22-23/101 Any Other Business**

**(i) Update on new PhD award allocation proposals**

The Dean spoke to a presentation on the new PGR Doctoral Awards distribution specifically for 2023/24 as recently approved by the Provost and the VP. All 24 Schools have been advised that each holds one of the new awards to be allocated competitively in a similar way to the previous 1252 awards. Each School is to advise the Dean of their chosen process to ensure that it is transparent and criteria-referenced.

The remaining awards are going to be distributed as follows: twelve are set aside for PI-led awards, aligned to specific research objectives, and targeting early career researchers recruiting their first or second PhD students. This award category also comprises an additional TILDA award funded by the Faculty of Health Sciences with a specific research focus related to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing. The aim is to create a network of individuals supporting one another in supervision and mentoring. The awards will be distributed amongst Faculties pro rata whereby two will go to Health Sciences, four to STEM and six to AHSS. From another four awards, one will be allocated to a Sanctuary student, one will be in the Dean's gift for crisis management and further two will be held at the discretion of the Provost and the VP to support strategic initiatives they want to progress.

The final twelve awards will be distributed into three groups of four students and four PIs as group-based research initiatives to start building cohort activity within Trinity PGR space. Each group would need to comprise at least two Faculty reps and two School reps. One award will go to a team led by a PI from AHSS, another award to a team from Health Sciences and a third one to a PI from STEM. Other members of the group can come from any of the other Faculties enabling work across all three Faculties further enhancing interdisciplinary research promoted by funders. It is anticipated that these awards will be recruited around March next year after launch, review, selection, advertising and recruitment.

After the Dean's presentation the following comments were made from the floor:

- (i) In response to a query, the Dean clarified that although the PI-led awards will aim to target specific disciplinary research it is assumed that they will also target larger cross-disciplinary themes either enhancing the social foundation or addressing the ecological ceiling which are sufficiently broad and inclusive domains covering any

specialist research.

- (ii) The Dean clarified that the presented configuration of awards is only for 2023/24 and will be reviewed for the following year.
- (iii) The School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies DTLP, who is also Chair of the University of Sanctuary expressed her gratitude for the inclusion of a Sanctuary student in the new award scheme. She noted that the allocation will enable for the first time to have a PG student brought into research in Trinity through the Sanctuary funding. The Sanctuary Committee will liaise with the Dean to work out criteria for competitive recruitment of a new award holder.

**Action GS/22-23/101(i):** Schools to advise the Dean of their chosen process for allocation of the new PGR Doctoral Awards specifically for 2023/24.

**Action GS/22-23/101(ii):** The Sanctuary Committee to liaise with the Dean to work out criteria for competitive recruitment of a new award holder.

**(ii) Research supervision development workshop, May 18 UCD**

The Dean advised that the inaugural national workshop on research supervision development will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

**(iii) Submission by Trinity and IUA to DFHERIS review**

The Dean noted that the issue was covered in her memo circulated in advance of the meeting. The memo was accompanied by the submission from Trinity and from the IUA to the DFHERIS review on State supports for PhD students. The Dean thanked members for their input, not all of which could be accommodated in the response due to word limits. All comments have been saved however for potential discussion with the reviewers expected to take place on Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> March, at an IUA meeting of the Deans of Graduate Studies in Trinity.

**(iv) Students' response to the current National Student Survey 2022/23**

In relation to Agenda C Item 13, the Dean asked members to spread the word in their Schools to draw students' attention to the current survey and encourage them to participate in it as at the moment the response rate is low.

**Action GS/22-23/101(iv):** DTLPs asked to draw students' attention to the current National Student Survey and encourage them to participate in it in their respective Schools.

**(v) Postgraduate Workers Organisation (PWO)**

Members reported a recent influx of emails from the PWO in their personal inboxes and enquired whether a College response can be used rather than academics replying individually. The Dean advised that she had discussions with the Provost and the VP about how to respond to the queries. The College position is that the status of the PWO remains unofficial with no formal representation in the College governance structure. It is unfortunate that there has been no PG representation on GSC from the GSU but there is at last PG representation in place within the SU. Most of the queries that reached the Dean dealt with demands covered under the State review currently underway, and the outcome of that review needs to be made available to

indicate how the status of PGR students can be influenced. The review group has been meeting with a wide range of PGR students, support groups and network organisations including the PWO. The Dean also met with PWO reps and offered to share with members the gist of her emails forwarded to the PWO.

**XX Section B for noting and approval**

**XX GS/22-23/102 Request for Council derogation for Bespoke Progression from Special PgCert to M.Ed. (Higher Education Strand) for admissions from 2023/24 – Memo from Prof. John Walsh (Strand coordinator, M. Ed. (Higher Education)), Dr Pauline Rooney (Head of Academic Practice, TT&L) and Dr Jonathan Johnston (Academic Developer, TT&L)**

Members agreed to support the request from Prof. John Walsh (M.Ed. (Higher Education Strand Coordinator), Dr Pauline Rooney (Head of Academic Practice, TT&L) and Dr Jonathan Johnston (Academic Developer, TT&L), to operationalise a progression pathway between two distinct but thematically congruent programmes already in existence i.e., the Master in Education (Higher Education) (M.Ed.) and the Special Purpose Certificate in Teaching, Learning and Assessment (SpCert). The request is seeking progression for students who have completed the SpCert to the Higher Education Strand of the M.Ed. (DPTED-EMHE-2P09), which is thematically related to the SpCert. This would permit a student progressing from the SpCert to receive an exemption from either the Reflecting on Practice in Learning and Teaching (ET7074) module or the Curriculum, Assessment and Supervision (ET7134) module within the M.Ed., both of which map very closely to the SpCert's programme level outcomes. The request was put together in consultation with the Dean to address a long standing challenge that has existed in transitioning successfully between the two thematically related courses.

**Decision GS/22-23/102:** The committee recommended the proposed progression from the Special Purpose Certificate in Teaching, Learning and Assessment to the Higher Education Strand of the M.Ed. for Council approval.

**XX Section C for noting**

**XX GS/22-23/103 Draft Minutes of the Marino Institute of Education Associated College Degrees Committee (MIE ACDC) of 2 March 2023**

The minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 of Marino Institute of Education Associated Colleges Degrees Committee were circulated to members.

**XX GS/22-23/104 National Student Survey Report 2021/22 – report and memo from Prof. Catherine McCabe Dean of Students**

The Dean referred members to the circulated memorandum on the National Student Survey Report 2021/22, which was approved by Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and is submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee for noting.

The Dean thanked all the committee members. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12pm.

