



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

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held in College Boardroom in Trinity Business School
at 10am Thursday 12 October 2023

XX = Council relevance

Present (Ex officio):

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

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Rachel Mc Loughlin, School of Biochemistry & Immunology

Professor Wladislaw Rivkin, 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 Aileen Douglas, School of English

Professor Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics & Microbiology

Professor Martine Cuypers, School of Histories & Humanities

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

Professor David Prendergast, School of Law

Professor Kathleen McTiernan, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences

Professor Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics

Professor Catherine Darker, School of Medicine

Professor Micha Ruhl, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Brian Keogh, School of Nursing & Midwifery

Professor Frédérique Vallieres, School of Psychology

Professor Etain Tannam, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies

Professor Tara Mitchell, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy

Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director, Tangent

Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services

Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L)

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

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

In attendance for all items:

Ms Leona Coady, Programme Director, Postgraduate Renewal Programme

Ms Frances Leogue, IT support Administrative Officer, Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies

In attendance for Postgraduate Renewal items:

Ms Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal)
Dr Rionnagh Sheridan, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal)

Not in attendance – Vacant:

Graduate Students' Union President
Graduate Students' Union Vice-President
Graduate student temporary nominated as GSC member (1)
Graduate student temporary nominated as GSC member (2)

Apologies:

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research
Professor Cathal Cadogan, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Graham Cross, School of Physics
Professor Erna O'Connor, School of Social Work & Social Policy
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary (TT&L)
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

In attendance for individual items:

Mr Gavin O'Donoghue and Ms Gemma Bodinetz (The Lir, National Academy of Dramatic Art at Trinity College) for GS/23-24/024

Prof. Maximilian Schormair (TBS) for GS/23-24/025

Prof. Sarah-Jane Cullinane (Lead on the ESD Fellows) and Prof. Jane Stout, VP For Biodiversity & Climate Action (Provost's Office) in person; Profs Felix Mezzanotte (Law), Carlos Rocha (Natural Sciences), Cicely Roche (Pharmacy/Academic Practise) and John Gallagher (Engineering), Dr Pauline Rooney and Ms Nicola Byrne (Academic Practice) (On Zoom) for GS/23-24/028

The Dean called out apologies and members and attendees participating on Zoom.

XX Section A for Discussion and Decision

XX GS/23-24/021 Minutes of GSC of 14 September 2023

The minutes were approved as circulated.

XX GS/23-24/022 Matters Arising

The Dean advised members that all actions from the September meeting had been completed. The Dean also noted that as the September Council has been deferred, decisions recommended at the previous meeting on Agenda A and B will be considered by the next Council on 1 November. The Dean went briefly through matters arising which were also covered in the Dean's memorandum circulated in advance of the meeting and some were later raised as Agenda items (GS/23-24/023, GS/23-24/028 and AOB GS/23-24/033) during the course of the meeting.

XX GS/23-24/023 GSC Terms of Reference - Dean of Graduate Studies to update

The Dean spoke to the revised GSC Terms of Reference (TOR) proposed at the last meeting, and specifically asked members to consider an item on information flow captured as a new TOR 2 “to ensure that members receive appropriate information on the activities of the GSC to enable them to fulfil their responsibility of informing Schools and professional units about decisions taken by the committee that may impact on the activities of Schools and professional units.” The proposed wording put an onus on GSC, as an information flow enabler, to ensure that DTLPs have adequate information to fulfil that responsibility. The Dean noted that in line with its statutory obligations, GSC TOR would be reviewed on an annual basis.

Decision GS/23-24/023: The committee endorsed the revised GSC Terms of Reference for Council approval.

XX GS/23-24/024 Validated Course proposal: MFA Strand in Theatre Producing - Gavin O'Donoghue, Director of Actor Training and Postgraduate Study, to present and Gemma Bodinetz, Lir Director and CEO, (The Lir, National Academy of Dramatic Art at Trinity College) to attend

The Dean welcomed Ms Gemma Bodinetz, the Lir Director and CEO, and Mr Gavin O'Donoghue, the Director of Actor Training and Postgraduate Study, to speak to the proposed new strand to the existing MFA suite, structured as a 13-month fulltime or 2-year part time course, weighted at 90 ECTS, with the option of exiting with a PG Dip award.

The Lir Director and CEO underlined that the new strand in Theatre Producing, unique on the island of Ireland in its focus, will be firmly grounded in practice based within the strong existing network of connections with the theatre industry as most of Lir teachers are also current practitioners. Ms Bodinetz noted that her own professional background is also in theatre producing and in education. She outlined to members the complex role of “theatre producer” and explained that the need for setting up a strand in the discipline came from Drama external examiners’ recommendations in response to consultations with students. The Director of Actor Training and Postgraduate Study subsequently outlined the new strand modules focusing on the Theatre Producing Projects module of 30 credits which has been set up as a summative expression of the student work experience gained during the duration of the taught part of the programme involving an application of the skills developed up to that point. Students will be required to produce a piece of theatre of at least 45 minutes as part of the Lir or the Fringe Festival engaging with student cohorts on the other three strands. Concluding their presentation, Ms Bodinetz summed up key benefits of studying on the Theatre Producing strand at the Lir.

In a discussion which followed, the Lir presenters provided the following clarifications:

- 1) Reassurance was provided in relation to the overall academic focus of the programme, citing in particular the emphasis on critical review within the Theatre in Context module, the broad theoretical framework within the Performing Arts Ecology module and noting that the Theatre Producing Projects module of 30 credits requires students to produce an academically self-reflective critical journal thoroughly analysing the production project.
- 2) Re ensuring adequate resources for students to produce their theatre shows – The plan is to have four internal productions involving Lir Bachelor in Acting students, a designer and a director to work with. There will be another four as part of the Grad Fest. The resource intensity explains the rather low number of students (minimum 4 and maximum 8) to be recruited into the Theatre Producing strand.
- 3) Re progression regulations in the Calendar entry - Students need to pass the 60 taught credits in order to progress to the Theatre Producing Projects module of 30 credits. In some instances, students can easily repeat assessment components but in others, any supplemental assessments will have to be carefully scheduled.

Action GS/23-24/024: Strand proposers to revise the Calendar entry in the strand proposal for Council in line with the clarification provided to enhance clarity of progression regulations.

- 4) Re the rationale behind the 13-months' duration of the full-time delivery format - Three 12 week terms in the Lir are indispensable for students to acquire sufficient skills and learning outcomes for the final project. In addition, students' professional placements take place in the Dublin Theatre Festival and in the Fringe occurring in September.
- 5) Re the lack of security for hourly paid, though recurrent, external teaching staff delivering significant amount of the course – The Lir Director and CEO undertook to look into the issue of possible instability of hourly contact staff but she presented the situation as of mutual advantage to the course and external staff whereby current theatre practitioners are strongly embedded in the course delivery and at the same time they benefit in having flexible teaching opportunities without having to fully commit to becoming teachers. Members shared a wider concern about the precarity of employment of many important teaching contributors across the university and suggested that consideration be given to extending the range of contract types beyond either hourly paid or permanent positions to enhance security of employment for what are often vulnerable members of staff.
- 6) Re a potential risk of over-dependence on a new appointment of course director in June 2024 – Should any delay occur with the planned appointment at that time, the Lir Director and CEO clarified that she would be stepping in to provide the necessary teaching, given her strong pedagogical and professional skill set, thereby ensuring the security of the course delivery for the next year. There is a lot of interest in the vacancy to warrant an expectation that it will be filled in a timely manner.

The Dean thanked the Lir representatives for their presentation and members for their careful consideration of the proposal to ensure that the new offering fulfils its potential. She noted that the proposal is currently under external review.

Decision GS/23-24/024: The committee endorsed the proposed new MFA strand in Theatre Producing with changes stipulated at the meeting for Council approval subject to a favourable external review.

XX GS/23-24/025 Course proposal: MSc in Responsible Business and Sustainability - Prof. Maximilian Schormair (TBS) to present

The Dean welcomed Prof. Maximilian Schormair (TBS), prospective course director of the proposed new course which aims to equip graduates with the knowledge to advance efforts to promote just and sustainable business practice, within what is likely to become an increasingly regulated environment. Prof. Schormair noted that the programme combines cutting-edge insights from business ethics, sustainability, as well as management and organisational science to educate students on how to meet the challenges of building a sustainable future for business and society. Through its research-driven and impact-oriented approach, the programme aims to enable future business leaders to harness the potential of business for responsible and sustainable value creation. The programme offers eight core modules (60 credits) and a dissertation (30 credits) that allows students to work on current challenges of responsible and sustainable business either in the form of an individual research dissertation or in small groups, as part of a student consulting project with a company, civil society or public sector organisation. Prof. Schormair took members through a list of differentiators, based on an in-depth benchmarking and market analysis, making the proposed programme stand out in relation to its competitors. In particular, he noted that four scholarships will

be offered over the next few years covering fees and a stipend of €1,500, targeting applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In a discussion which ensued, Prof. Schormair provided the following clarifications:

- 1) Re fairness of assessing the dissertation as a group project – TBS runs a specific assessment scheme, approved by GSC, for grading group projects across the Masters suite of courses which ensures that each student's contribution to the overall project is captured.
- 2) Re student perception of proposed assessment regulations and change of modular structure – Instead of the traditional Masters model in TBS of twelve modules of 5 credit, the proposed course consists of four modules of 10 credits and another four of 5 credits; this has been put in place to secure more time and space to expand subject area and content delivery and will constitute an example for a planned review of other Masters courses in a similar manner to deliver the programmes in TBS in a more streamlined way. The shift to 10 ECTS modules is also taking place in competitor Business Schools internationally. The proposed progression regulations state that if a student fails more than 2 modules but fewer than 4 they can remain on the course but move to the postgraduate diploma register whereas on other Masters they are required to do so when they failed more than 3 and fewer than 6 modules. There is no requirement in TBS to harmonise all Masters with respect to their progression regulations and students' expectations will be managed in the lead up to the harmonisation of the rules across the whole Masters suite.
- 3) Re there being no evidence in the proposal how the course is going to positively impact on the society as stipulated in the course learning outcomes and letters of support – The course is built on the premise that sustainability has a social component which feeds into the society, and Prof. Schormair provided examples across multiple modules thereof in particular noting that group projects will cover civil society and public sector organisations in addition to business entities.

Action GS/23-24/025: The proposer to express clearly in the proposal the societal dimension of the course in the version for Council.

The Dean concluded that the course has the potential to become an important element of Trinity's growing suite of programmes focused on sustainability. She thanked Prof. Schormair for his presentation and members for their feedback important in ensuring the proposed course meets its objectives and advised that the proposal awaits an external review.

Decision GS/23-24/025: The committee endorsed the proposed Masters in Responsible Business and Sustainability with changes stipulated at the meeting for Council approval subject to a favourable external review.

XX GS/23-24/026 Identifying costs for students associated with PG courses in promotional material - Dean of Graduate Studies to present

The Dean spoke to a short memo that set out the challenges some students encounter if they are not appropriately prepared for costs other than tuition fees associated with their registering on some PGT programmes. Members were asked to approve that Schools make clear on all promotional materials any known costs additional to fees but invisible to applicants, such as related to lab clothing, travel, placement, equipment needs, field trips that students are likely to incur as part of the academic requirements of their programme. Schools were not asked to change the need to charge these additional costs but make them visible on their promotional materials to applicants even when participation in extracurricular activities related to the course is optional.

Decision GS/23-24/026: The committee endorsed the proposal that PGT courses clearly indicate on their promotional materials in addition to fees all “invisible” additional costs related to the course delivery such as lab clothing, travel, placement, equipment needs including likely participation costs in course-related optional events.

XX GS/23-24/027 PGR Module proposal: Induction module for non-resident PhD students – Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary: Graduate Education to present

The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) referred to the discussions on the Non-Resident PhD track at the May meeting (GS/22-23/131) which concluded that such a model could be scaled up as a useful means of broadening student recruitment subject to additional supports being put in place. In response, in consultation with supervisors and students over the summer, Dr Doran has developed a new 5 ECTS mandatory module as part of the mandatory 20 credit volume taught component on the non-resident PhD register. The new module dovetails with the existing on-campus orientation programme when the student commences their PhD with a four day visit on campus and follows up with a number of workshops. Some of the content on the proposed module overlaps with the already existing modules for PhD students. The new module pivots as a network builder for non-resident students strengthening their links with College, other PhD students and academic staff.

In a short discussion which ensued, Dr Doran provided the following clarifications:

- 1) Re module assessment – Dr Doran confirmed that an ongoing reflective journal on Blackboard linked in with an end-piece assessment has been intended as part of the module assessment.
- 2) Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs) – A member volunteered to provide direct feedback to Dr Doran on tightening up and streamlining MLOs.

Action GS/23-24/027: Dr Doran to revise the proposed MLOs considering direct feedback to be provided before socialising the final Module proposal across Schools.

The Dean thanked members for their feedback and input and Dr Doran for his presentation.

Decision GS/23-24/027: The committee endorsed the proposed mandatory module of 5 ECTS for non-resident PhD students with changes stipulated at the meeting before socialising the document to Schools.

XX GS/23-24/028 Trinity Sustainability Strategy - Prof. Sarah-Jane Cullinane, Lead on the ESD Fellows, Trinity Sustainability Strategy - Prof. Sarah-Jane Cullinane, Lead on the ESD Fellows, to present, and Prof. Jane Stout, VP For Biodiversity & Climate Action (Provost's Office) to attend

The Dean invited Profs Sarah-Jane Cullinane and Jane Stout to update members on the Sustainability Strategy in development over the past year. Building on the overview of the draft Trinity Sustainability Strategy shared at the last meeting, the two presenters discussed the circulated draft Strategy and draft Action Plan focusing in particular on the proposed implementation of the ‘Education’ pillar of the Action Plan.

Prof. Cullinane spoke to the ESD implementation plan. She noted that all members of the ESD programme team have joined the meeting for the item on Zoom. She also noted that the newly recruited ESD Student Interns will be working with the team on the co-creation of the implementation plan and the Novice module, and a Research Assistant will be working on Trinity as a

“living lab” initiative. Subsequently, she talked members through the slides on making the ESD strategic vision and strategic objective the reality. Both UG and PG students in Trinity are targeted to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to think, plan and act with responsibility and compassion for themselves, each other and the planet. Staff and students will teach, learn and inspire one another through a lens that recognises humans as part of and dependent on nature, and reflect upon their roles as global, ecological and intergenerational citizens. Using both discipline-specific and interdisciplinary approaches, Trinity’s curriculum will be oriented towards ensuring the development of key competencies for sustainability. It is intended that all Trinity staff will gain time and access to collaborative, cross-disciplinary support networks, resources and developmental programmes. Subsequently, Prof. Cullinane spoke to Key Competencies for Sustainability such as collaboration, critical thinking, self-awareness and integrated problem solving, and referred to the narrow versus broad curriculum approach to support integration of ESD into the course delivery. Three annual phases of curriculum integration have been proposed namely co-creation in 2023/24, a pilot in 2024/25 and rolling out in 2025/26. The implementation plan is envisaged as a cyclical rather than linear process with a constant feedback loop built into it.

Action GS/23-24/028 (i): Prof. Cullinane asked GSC members to actively engage with the co-creation stage of the curriculum integration during the year in terms of ESD Implementation Plan for Trinity, setting up the Novice level 5 ECTS Common Module, exploring UG & PG pathway options for ESD, identifying existing ESD-related best practice/modules that can be replicated by staff and Graduate Teaching Assistants, considering a proposal for Trinity to become a sustainability-related “Living Lab” and supporting the student-led auditing criteria and methodology measuring the effectiveness of the ESD project.

Prof. Cullinane concluded by identifying how Schools can contribute to the ESD initiative. She underlined that within the PG area, Schools could work with ESD Fellows to identify and explore ESD pathway opportunities on existing PGT programmes, support teaching staff at all levels who engage with the ESD staff development programmes offered through the Centre for Academic Practice and add the ESD Fellows to the agenda of future staff meetings to share the plan, explore with staff how it could work in their Schools, and the resources available.

In a discussion which followed the following issues were raised:

- 1) Re how to determine if the implementation of ESD strategy has been successful – It is an issue in progress and the auditing methodology and tools for curriculum mapping are still under development. The aim is to set up an efficient mechanism owned by the Schools without creating another labour intensive process for the staff, ideally to be built into already existing review processes. It is planned to set up an Environmental Sustainability Management Group to which Schools will be reporting annually on their progress in implementation of the Strategy.
- 2) Re auditing framework to identify what sustainability-related PGT contents are currently being on offer in Trinity – The TBS DTLP has offered to work with the ESD Fellows to try out a PGT framework audit on a pilot basis before it is rolled out across all Schools. The ESD Fellows are welcome to come to staff meeting to advise how to enhance embedding sustainability into the TBS programmes. Prof. Cullinane was delighted to accept the invitation to work with the TBS and to try out various methodologies to optimise the pilot

methodology before the roll out.

- 3) Re there being insufficient representation on the ESD team (both at the Fellows and the student representation side) of the voice from Arts and Humanities disciplines in College and the apparent need to squeeze the current curriculum to make room for the Novice module (the concern emanated from the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies) - Prof. Cullinane noted that she met with the School DUTL the previous week to ascertain how the ESD project might be accommodated in the School. The plan is to build it into the existing UG common architecture and Trinity electives without creating additional stresses. Wide-ranging consultations will be carried out before anything can be decided. Prof. Roche underlined that any ESD-generated issues are considered in a holistic way by the team. The Novice module under development is at a foundational level of skills and competencies and will not be Faculty-bound. Fundamental concepts will be integrated as case studies and feedback will be sought from colleagues from all disciplines in College. It will be the institutional decision still to be made as to whether the module will be optional or mandatory. Prof. Rocha noted that the composition of the ESD team has been selected through an open recruitment and interview process. He reiterated that feedback from the entire College is being sought towards the Novice module development.
- 4) Re there being certain issues listed in the Targets that are subsequently not coming through in the next two years in the implementation phase, as per Appendix, such as there being no itemized target on mental health although listed as a fundamental target under Healthy Trinity – Prof. Stout clarified that there is sufficient scope to develop actions around mental health within the next two years and these can still be called out specifically.

Action GS/23-24/028 (ii): The School of Medicine DTLP to liaise directly with the ESD team on optimal way of incorporating mental health actions in the implementation plan.

- 5) Re there being concern that while there is emphasis on curriculum redesign to incorporate ESD content there is no corresponding clarity on the commitment of College authorities on cross cutting policies around sustainability in terms of processes, procedures and policies to impact on staff, culture and wellbeing of all in College. On the positive side it was noted that College is planning to introduce “green procurement”. Concern was expressed that pension funds investment should also be considered in the “green” light. - Prof. Stout underlined that ESD goes far beyond the curricular adaptations of sustainable contents and has a holistic strategic dimension down to including an operational management of waste management. A new principal committee of Board dedicated to environmental sustainability will be set up. There is genuine commitment from management and operational structures in College in support of the ESD strategy.

In response to the presenters’ request, the committee endorsed the strategy and proposed ‘Education’ actions, and to engage in the development of the ESD implementation plan.

Decision GS/23-24/028: The committee endorsed for Council approval the proposed strategy and ‘Education’ Actions and undertook to engage in the ESD implementation plan.

present

In 2014, Council approved setting up a new Framework structure for PGT programmes, in addition to the already existing 'traditional' structures, to build flexibility for students and Schools. In setting out these two parallel pathways, the original memorandum did not make explicit whether or not students could combine these pathways by progressing from a traditional programme structure to a framework structure-based course. In her memorandum the Dean sought members' endorsement to recommend to Council that a student's accumulation of ECTS should determine their eligibility to progress to the next stage of an award, rather than their point of entry. Council's approval would empower the AR to simply transfer eligible students from a postgraduate diploma on the traditional structure at the exit point to a framework structure entry point at Masters Top up providing the framework structure exists alongside the traditional structure in that particular course. Students with a PgDip award will still have to rescind the award before they can graduate with a Masters award when they bring the 60 credits into the Masters Top up to avoid double-counting of credits. It is the title of the highest award which counts. The current Calendar regulation permits the progression return to the framework-based course within 5 years. The Dean noted that additional work will be undertaken to streamline PGT course structures to be brought to GSC at a further meeting.

Decision GS/23-24/029: The committee endorsed for Council approval the proposed progression transfer between the traditional and the framework pathways on the Masters courses which run both pathways in parallel.

XX GS/23-24/030 Trinity Research Doctoral Awards (TRDA) – Dean of Graduate Studies to update

The Dean spoke to her memorandum and noted that the new 52 TRDAs funded annually were allocated in 2023/24 across a number of categories i.e., 24 allocated for School nomination, 12 allocated for PI- or Student plus PI-led projects with a particular focus on early career academics recruiting their first or second PhD student, 12 for group-based awards to continue to build up more capacity, 3 at the strategic discretion of the Provost, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, and one as a Sanctuary award. The Dean suggested that with some enhancements to the actual selection process, the model for allocating awards should be maintained unchanged for 2024/25 in order to gather sufficient data to establish whether the model is appropriate.

In a discussion which followed the following issues were raised:

- 1) Members endorsed a request that one award per School will be guaranteed to facilitate planning ahead, marketing and recruitment across Schools. The Dean undertook to check the long-term support for this allocation at the source of funding and report back to the committee. She noted that members can be assured on the spot that there will be commitment for the allocation at least for the next two years.
- 2) Re March registrants applying for the School-level award – The Dean clarified that it is within the School decision not to select a September registrar but to defer the award to the March registrants should there be insufficiently qualified applicants in the September cohort as the award is for allocation during the whole academic year. The challenge will be to know at the point of making the decision whether the March cohort might yield stronger applicants than the September ones. A number of Schools have deferred the award for newly recruited March-registering students during the current academic year. The July deadline applies only to the September registrants to ensure that they receive their first stipend in a timely

manner. Schools can be facilitated in holding the award for March registrants.

- 3) The Dean clarified that, awards for 2024/25 launch on 1 November after Council approval. 1 July is the deadline for Schools notification about their select candidates for September 2024 registration. The School-allocated awards are organized locally.
- 4) Re tracking the academic outcomes of different cohorts of award holders against the general population of PhD students – The Dean clarified that criteria i.e., frequency of availing of supervision supports, completion rates, volunteering to teach for such tracking are being identified as the scheme only commenced the previous year.
- 5) Re uptake on the group-based awards – The Dean confirmed that the same requirement will continue i.e., a representation from 3 Schools in 2 Faculties for a group to be considered. Of significance is not where the PIs are based but to which School (discipline) students are registered in order to see the cross-Faculty distribution. Members suggested that a track record be also kept on the Faculty-links of PIs to determine that intermediate career-stage academics without established cross-Faculty contacts are not under-represented.
- 6) Re individual PIs holding more than 1 team-based College award – Some academics' work is very interdisciplinary, and the same group of PIs can apply for awards annually to hold multiple ones at any given year. A mechanism should therefore be set up for ensuring fairness and equity. In some Schools a PI is only entitled to hold one College-based award at a time and their student has to finish before they can apply again.
- 7) Re scheduling of recruitment in different award categories – A member requested that selection for individual awards should be scheduled first before other allocations at Faculty level are considered in case there is an upswing in excellent applicants in the first category who can have a second change in the second category if they are unsuccessful.

Decision GS/23-24/030: The committee endorsed for Council approval the same model for allocating Trinity Research Doctoral Awards be maintained unchanged for 2024/25.

XX GS/23-24/031 PGR monthly update (October) - Leona Coady, PG Renewal Programme Director, to present

Ms Leona Coady, PG Renewal Programme Director, gave a brief overview of PG Renewal key achievements over the past month listed on the circulated monthly slide for October. Some items (related to WP2) on the slide were taken subsequently as Agenda items under PG Renewal while others were reported on as continuing in progress or finalised, as discussed at previous meetings. Horizon 1 is nearing completion in December and a summary of its achievements is uploaded on the website. Horizon 2 has commenced in September and its details are still being worked out with timelines being finalised aligned with deliverables to be submitted to the November GSC. Membership of respective work packages are being adjusted for Horizon 2. Work on analysing exit awards and eligibility criteria for supervising Masters research projects is progressing under Curriculum and Triple I work package. Under Structured PhD and Doctoral Programmes work is progressing on Guidelines for thesis committees. Under Student/Staff Experience papers will come to the November GSC on benchmarking best practice for conflict management in supervisory relationship, and integration of adjunct staff into the academic community. Under the Student Lifecycle a roll out will take place on 1 November of the online application form. An analysis of PG graduation experience across different award types is being finalised. A final report on completion of Horizon 1 will be brought to GSC and Council in January.

XX GS/23-24/032 PGR: 1) Revision of the outcomes of the formal review meetings in the Terms of

Reference for Thesis Committees; 2) Approval of reporting templates supporting student progression milestones -Prof. Rachel Mc Loughlin (WP2 Lead) to present

Prof. Rachel Mc Loughlin, the WP2 Lead, spoke to two items requiring members' consideration. One was a revision to the wording of the possible outcomes of the annual review meetings with research students, to ensure consistency between the guides, the Calendar and the Terms of Reference. Item No. 6 Outcomes of Formal Review Meetings needed to be amended to include 6.2 to provide for a student to progress after some minor changes have been made to the annual review or confirmation reports. As a result, the Terms of Reference (as per Appendix A in the circulated documentation) would provide the following outcomes of formal review meetings:

- 6.1. Student to progress.
- 6.2. ***Student to progress after some minor changes have been made to the annual review or confirmation reports.***
- 6.3. Student to present for re-assessment or re-interview.
- 6.4. Student to transfer to a lower degree register.
- 6.5. Student does not progress.
- 6.6. A change in supervision should be made.

The second change referred to the updated templates to capture students' progress. Prof. Mc Loughlin was seeking feedback and approval for the implementation of the enhanced Annual Review Report and Confirmation Report templates in MT 2023/24. She noted that when the thesis committee was introduced in 2019, there was no standard "confirmation report form". There was only a form for submission to the AR confirming that the student completed confirmation.

In a short discussion which ensured the following clarifications were obtained:

- 1) Re membership of thesis committee - The Dean confirmed that members of the thesis committee can be internal examiners. The minimum requirement is that there must be one academic from the student's School on the thesis committee, and the second member can be within the School, from College or an external expert to give the Schools flexibility of the membership made up of relevant experts. External members may not be external examiners. Members of the panel do not have to have a PhD but those acting as an internal examiner normally do have to have a doctoral degree or an equivalent degree.
- 2) Re timings - Deadlines are clearly stated at the top of the forms.
- 3) Re probation on the PhD register. - It has been confirmed that the first year on the PhD register is probationary. A member suggested that two additional tick boxes could be added to the form to ask if the student maintained adequate contact with the supervisor and if the student has made adequate progress throughout the year. These factors are in line with the two grounds quoted in the Calendar for failed probation.
- 4) Re signing off the form - As the School DTLP signs the confirmation report form a box for that needs to be included on the form.
- 5) Re seeking clarification if all meetings with the student require an agenda as some are of pastoral nature. - The formal agenda is only required for the annual progress review meeting with the thesis committee which constitutes formal recommendation that the student may progress. Students may meet with their thesis committee members at other times of the year without formality.

In conclusion by responding to a query, the Dean explained that in the past the two reports i.e., the academic "annual progress report" and the "progression report" (part of the AR student lifecycle) were often confused by the academic community, and therefore the two reporting templates

supporting student progression milestones are now intentionally differentiated by a new title of “the annual review form” replacing the first report.

Decision GS/23-24/032 (i): The committee endorsed for Council approval the revision of the outcomes of the formal review meetings in the Terms of Reference for Thesis Committees. (the two reporting templates supporting student progression milestones will go to Council for information as they are inherent parts of the Terms of Reference document).

Decision GS/23-24/032 (ii): The committee approved the two new reporting templates supporting student progression milestones with feedback from the meeting for immediate use in College with a draft of Revised Terms of Reference for Thesis Committees (subject to Council approval). Power BI links will be accordingly updated.

XX GS/23-24/033 Any Other Business

(i) The Postgraduate Student Support Officer noted that the newsletter has advertised that the Postgraduate Student Assistance Fund is shortly opening for applications. The fund is open *de facto* the whole year round.

Action GS/23-24/033 (i): Members were asked to alert any PG student who might be in a financial difficult to contact the Postgraduate Advisory Service.

(ii) In response to a query about the status of PG representation on College/School committees, the Dean invited Dr Doran to speak to it. Dr Doran clarified that there is no date yet from the Students’ Union for the new elections but once the elections take place Dr Doran will circulate names of reps for the GSC and for the Schools. The School of Education DTLP noted that his School went ahead with the process from the previous year. The Dean stated she supported any School that finds a way of securing student representation on its committees until the Students’ Union-organised elections.

(iii) The Inaugural National Thesis in 3 Competition: the promotional material is to be released soon and will be circulated by the Dean.

Action GS/23-24/033 (iii): The Dean to circulate promotional material to be released in relation to the Inaugural National Thesis in 3 Competition.

(iv) The Dean appealed to members from STEM and Health Sciences to volunteer to join the working group set up by the School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies DTLP (Action GS/23-24/010) to review the proposed changes to the research supervision award application form and report back to the committee at a November meeting.

XX Section B for Noting and Decision

XX GS/23-24/034 Revised Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students Policy– Revised policy and memorandum from Dean of Graduate Studies

The Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students policy was first approved by Council in June 2016. It has undergone review as part of the cyclical review of policies and to take into consideration the Graduate Studies Committee approval of the report titled Review of the Trinity

Non-Resident PhD Pilot Programme-(Decision GS/22-23/131). The revised policy includes the following text as point 4.3 to clearly identify supervision arrangements relating to students registered on the Non-Resident PhD as being outside the scope of the policy “This policy does not consider remote supervision arrangements in relation to students registered on the Non-Resident PhD pathway. Remote supervision arrangements as relevant to such students are set out within the Non-Resident PhD guidance.”

Decision GS/23-24/035 : The committee recommended for Council approval the revised Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students policy.

XX GS/23-24/035 Revised Academic Appeals Policy – Revised policy and memorandum from Registrar Prof. Neville Cox

The Registrar has asked for GSC endorsement for a change to the Appeals Policy to reflect an amendment to the Statutes approved at the last Board meeting. Currently the Policy advises students that “8.6 Any student who has an appeal in progress that could have implications for their degree result is advised not to proceed with degree conferral until the outcome of the appeal has been confirmed.” The Board-approved amendment to the Statutes says that students are prohibited from taking post-graduation appeals. To make the current Appeals Policy version consistent with the new rule in the Statutes, the Registrar has replaced 8.6 with “Students should note that it is not possible to commence or continue any academic appeal related to their course of study after they have been conferred with a qualification arising out of that course of study.”

Decision GS/23-24/035: The committee recommended for Council approval the Registrar’s change to the Appeals Policy reflecting an amendment to the Statutes approved at the last Board meeting.

XX GS/23-24/036 Suspension of PgDip in Immune Therapies (HCI 3) for 2023/24 – Memorandum from Prof. Catherine Darker (School of Medicine DTLP)

The PG Diploma in Immune Therapies in the School of Medicine has been suspended in 2023/24 due to insufficient applicants. As this is a HEA HCI funded course, the HEA has been notified.

Decision GS/23-24/036 : The committee recommended for Council approval suspension of the HCI 3 PG Diploma in Immune Therapies in the School of Medicine.

XX GS/23-24/037 Change to commence Micro-credential in Childhood Adversity in September 2024 – Memorandum from Prof. Brian Keogh (School of Nursing and Midwifery DTLP)

Micro-credential in Childhood Adversity that was due to start in January 2024 is rescheduled to commence in September 2024, due to staff unavailable in Semester 2. This decision has been made in consultation with the module leader and the Human Capital Initiative Micro credentials Project Team. It is anticipated, depending on the number of applicants, that the Childhood Adversity MC will also run in January 2025

Decision GS/23-24/037 : The committee recommended for Council approval that the MC in Childhood Adversity will start in September 2024 and will also run in January 2025.

XX Section C for Noting

GS/23-24/038 Academic Integrity Awareness Week – Dean of Graduate Studies to update

The Dean asked members to note that the Academic Integrity Steering Group (AISG) has reconfigured and reconvened subsuming the previous three working groups into the steering group with an updated membership. Trinity will participate in the National Academic Integrity Awareness

week, from October 16th-20th by organising a number of events. In particular, staff were invited to join in two panel sessions to be held during the week. The focus of the academic year will be on designing alternative robust assessments other than reverting to invigilated hand-written examinations as a means of protecting the integrity of Trinity awards from the challenges of GenAI. Members were also circulated *Generative AI Guidelines for Educators* recently issued by NAIN (the National Academic Integrity Network) as a useful summary and reminder of the importance of critically reviewing the existing assessment practices.

GS/23-24/039 Update on RPL Policy Review – Dean of Graduate Studies to update

Finally, the Dean brought to members' attention that as part of the upcoming review of the RPL policy a lunchtime event organised by Graham Glanville, Project Lead: Recognition of Prior Learning, Trinity's RPL Lead in the HCI-funded national RPL programme, will take place in November specifically focused on RPL.

The Dean thanked all the committee members. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12.45pm.

Prof. Martine Smith

Date: 12 October 2023