



## **GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held in College Boardroom in Trinity Business School  
at 10am on Thursday 23 May 2024

---

**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 Ivana Dusparic, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Jennifer O'Meara, School of Creative Arts

Professor Noel Ó Murchadha, School of Education

Professor Sarah McCormack, School of Engineering

Professor Jane Suzanne Carroll, 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 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 Cathal Cadogan, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Lorraine Swords, School of Psychology

Professor Tara Mitchell, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy

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

Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director, Tangent

Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary (TT&L)

Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services

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

Prof. Immo Warntjes, Associate Dean of Research on behalf of Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research

*In attendance for Postgraduate Renewal Items:*

Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal)

Aoife Kelly, Programme Administrator (PG Renewal)

*Postgraduate representatives – attendance for all items:*

Ms Almudena Moreno Borrallo

*Not in attendance – Vacant:*

Graduate Students' Union President  
Graduate Students' Union Vice-President

*Apologies:*

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research  
Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry  
Professor Ioannis Polyzois, School of Dental Science  
Professor Kathleen McTiernan, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences  
Professor Graham Cross, School of Physics  
Professor Etain Tannam, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies  
Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L)  
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience  
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services  
Mr Rory O'Sullivan, Postgraduate representative

In attendance for individual items:

Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice (Centre for Academic Practice, TT&L) for item GS/23-24/149  
Prof. Annemarie Bennett, Academic Director (CHARM-EU Masters) for item GS/23-24/150  
Prof. Richard Porter, Dean of Students for item GS/23-24/151  
Prof. Brian Broderick (Work Package#4 Member: Triple I) for item GS/23-24/156  
Prof. Ashley Clements (Co-Lead, Work Package#1 PT Taught) for item GS/23-24/157  
Ms Helen O'Hara (Lead, Work Package#3) and Mr Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager, PG Renewal Programme) for item GS/23-24/159

As this was the final meeting of 2023/24, the Dean thanked all committee members for their hard work, and commitment throughout the year, and bid a special warm farewell to twelve Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) from the Schools of Social Sciences & Philosophy, Social Work & Social Policy, Chemistry, Computer Science & Statistics, Creative Arts, Dental Science, Engineering, Histories & Humanities, Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences, Medicine, Psychology and Tangent who were finishing off as DTLPs. The Dean also extended appreciation to Ms Frances Leogue from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies for providing efficient logistical support and to Ms Ewa Sadowska, GSC Secretary, for organising the meetings.

**XX Section A**

**XX GS/23-24/147 Minutes of GSC of 25 April 2024**

The minutes were approved as circulated.

**XX GS/23-24/148 Matters Arising**

The Dean advised members that all Actions from the April meeting had been completed or attended to. She also noted that all Decisions from the previous meeting on Agenda A and B were approved by the last Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. Most Matters Arising were closed off and covered in the Dean's memorandum circulated in advance of the meeting.

Re GS/23-24/133, the School of Education DTLP advised that the programme team for the Postgraduate Diploma in Irish for Teachers are exploring how best to identify a provider for the

Gaeltacht placement element of the course in line with Trinity's established procurement procedures.

**XX GS/23-24/149 Institutional Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research - Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice (Centre for Academic Practice, TT&L)**

The Dean welcomed Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice, who noted that the institutional “Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research” is being proposed in response to challenges but also as an opportunity to use generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) technologies in teaching, learning, assessment and research in higher education. Spearheaded by the Academic Secretary and led by the Centre for Academic Practice, the draft “Statement” has been developed in collaboration with academic and professional services stakeholders from across Trinity and in an effort to ensure alignment with Trinity’s “Statement on Integrity” (2022) and with the European Commission’s “Living Guidelines on the Responsible Use of Generative AI in Research” (2024). At present, the “Statement” does not provide guidelines on appropriate/inappropriate use of GenAI, recognising that Schools will retain disciplinary autonomy in this regard. However, the Centre for Academic Practice, along with many other stakeholders in the university will continue to conduct research into the area and advise colleagues on developments and available resources. The goal is to have a College-approved “Statement” in early Michaelmas Term 2024/25 with the final draft to be considered by the GSC in advance to the Council submission.

As part of the College-wide consultation, the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer have suggested a much closer alignment (than that captured in the circulated draft “Statement” primarily relating to teaching and learning) between Trinity’s principles and those in the European Commission’s guidelines. The proposed alternative set of principles covering teaching, learning and research was included in the Dean’s memorandum circulated in advance of the meeting.

The committee was asked for their feedback on the merits of the circulated draft “Statement” and on the approach to be taken namely whether a single statement should be put together covering teaching, learning and research rather than generating two complementary statements that serve slightly different audiences and purposes.

In a discussion which ensued the following comments were made:

- 1) Paid versus open free AI and GenAI resources create inequality in terms of access to education and this disparity should be captured. Should College make a commitment to ensure staff and students are AI-literate, it should provide access to paid versions of relevant resources for all students.
- 2) The introduction of Microsoft 365 Copilot, designed for Microsoft 365 applications and services, would be a significant advance for implementing AI but the chatbot is not in use in College yet.
- 3) More information should be included in the “Statement” on re-designing assessment to make it AI-proof. TBS has developed an AI-literacy training for staff, co-designed with the use of AI, which can be shared with other interested Schools.
- 4) Historically, the “Statement” evolved with a focus on teaching, learning and assessment. However, given that the vast majority of students engage in research, to have value the “Statement” should cover research activities, and will require consideration by the Research Committee. It is therefore desirable to have a single “Statement”. The current draft is being developed to include research, potentially providing an opportunity to align it with the European Commission’s guidelines.

- 5) The Information Technology Services representative advised that Board has approved a policy on AI as part of the new Security and IT policies. Freedom to use IT technologies in academic research needs to be compatible with cyber security requirements of the university. The new Federated IT Committee of Board will require a sign up of every School to confirm that the technology they use is secure. Any technology used for processing university data, broadly understood, needs to be vetted by IT and Data Protection Office. Teaching and research data belong to the university under the IT policy. The committee was advised that it is intended to aggregate permissible technologies. The representative reminded the committee that GenAI resources are cloud-based and there is already a Cloud Policy in College. By adopting a specific platform for use, staff are essentially adopting its terms and conditions; a contract is being entered into, and staff do not have the authority to enter into such contracts thereby binding the College into them. Individual research endeavour may guide an academic towards certain technologies, but feedback from students indicates that they appreciate consistency in technology platforms. The Good Research Practice guidelines capture many of these principles.
- 6) The Board AI Policy should be referenced in the "Statement".
- 7) The Academic Secretary underlined a distinction that the draft under consideration is a "statement" rather than a "policy". Schools should be directed to policies on engagement with AI.
- 8) The Information Technology Services representative advised that an email on the use of AI tools has already gone out in College pointing staff towards training.
- 9) A suggestion was made that training should be enhanced beyond basic understanding to fluent digital literacy in the use of AI technologies in an innovative and adaptable way enabling staff to critique sources and outputs of generative technologies. A definition of "digital/AI literacy" should be formulated.

**Action GS/23-24/149(i):** The committee recommended a single "Statement" to be developed to encompass research and to align it with the European Commission's guidelines.

**Action GS/23-24/149(ii):** The committee recommended that enhanced training be put in place aiming for fluent digital literacy in the use of AI technologies in an innovative and adaptable way for staff to critique sources and outputs of generative technologies. A definition of "digital/AI literacy" should be formulated.

**Action GS/23-24/149(iii):** Further feedback on the institutional "Statement" should be emailed directly to the Head of Academic Practice.

The Dean thanked the Head of Academic Practice for her engaging presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/23-24/150 CHARM EU - Prof. Annemarie Bennett, Academic Director (CHARM-EU Masters) to present and Prof. Jake Byrne incoming Trinity CHARM EU Project Director to attend**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Annemarie Bennett, Academic Director (CHARM-EU Masters) and Prof. Jake Byrne incoming Trinity CHARM EU Project Director (currently a GSC member as Academic Director of Tangent). Prof. Bennett spoke to a set of slides. She reminded members that Trinity was the founding member of the CHARM-EU European Universities Alliance and the only Designated Awarding Body in the original partnership approved in 2020/21 which led to the launch of the CHARN-EU in September 2021. The CHARM EU partnership secured a grant in the second round of European Commission funding in 2022. The number of alliance partners was increased to nine with

the new members, all Designated Awarding Bodies, including Abo Akademi University (Finland), Julian Maximilian's University Würzburg (Germany), Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and the University of Bergan (Norway).

The expanded Alliance is preparing an enhanced "Masters in Global Challenges for Sustainability" and the revised proposal is expected to be submitted for first stage approval by the Graduate Studies Committee in September. Subsequently, the proposal will be reviewed by an external panel in a designated process to be coordinated by the Catalan Quality Agency, as approved previously by Council (CL/20-21/059). The Consortium Agreement has been revised to reflect the addition of the new partners and to introduce changes in the governance structures aimed at supporting the expanded Alliance and the revised programme and other CHARM-EU activities.

The committee noted

1. the approval process for the CHARM-EU Masters under the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, updated to reflect the new Alliance membership and the process for the approval of the enhanced Masters proposal; and
2. the final draft of the Consortium Agreement still to be signed by all Alliance partners.

**Decision GS/23-24/150:** The committee approved the proposed External Panel Members to conduct the External Panel Review process under the European Approach, to be coordinated by the Catalan Quality Agency.

In a short discussion which ensued, the CHARM-EU Academic Director clarified that there will be a short timeline between the finalisation of the approval process in December 2024 and the opening of the new course for recruitment in January 2025 with a view to commencing the new course in September 2025. In the worst-case scenario, the new Masters will start in September 2026.

The Dean thanked the CHARM-EU Academic Director for her succinct presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/23-24/151 Revised "Fitness to Study" policy – Prof. Richard Porter, Dean of Students to present**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Richard Porter, Dean of Students who noted that the Fitness to Study Policy was last considered by the Committee in 2018 and has come up for a periodic review under the Policy Management Framework. Feedback from the stakeholders has confirmed that the policy remains relevant and aligned with good practice, the procedures prescribed by the policy remain good practice, the input of the Fitness to Study Advisory Group is valuable, and the current Advisory Group membership is appropriate. No major changes to the policy have therefore been recommended. The Dean of Students talked members through a small number of changes regarding information storage, information sharing, the convening of the Fitness to Study Advisory Group chaired by the Dean of Students, and the role of the Advisory Group and the Dean of Students as "the honest broker" but underlined that these do not impact the text of the policy. The existing procedures, the three levels for student case considerations and the role of key personnel remain unchanged. Work is continuing on developing a flow chart for students and their reps, and on updating guidelines for staff raising a notice of concern. Additional discussion over the summer 2024 will focus on considering the best mechanism for consistent recording and storing of information, on formalizing the Dean of Students' memoranda to the decision makers, and on considering how better to promote the policy and to capture data. The revised policy has been approved by the Student Life Committee and the Undergraduate Studies Committee and, if approved by the Graduate Studies Committee, will be presented to the University Council and Board for approval for implementation in 2024/25.

In a discussion which ensued the following comments were made:

- i) Operationalisation of the policy appears not to be sufficiently smooth as managing the student situation locally in the School (equivalent to policy level 1) can be protracted, and it is not clear when policy level 2 should be initiated. The Dean of Students clarified that at any time at level 1 Schools can request that the Advisory Group assess how to progress the lingering case.
- ii) A “fitness to practice” Policy, currently also under revision, provides a separate route to the “fitness to study” Policy for consideration of student cases. Should students find themselves in difficulty on a placement, the Dean of Students will decide which of the two policies will apply to address the student issue. Sometimes a case can be managed under both policies. “Fitness to study” primarily deals with health and mental health whereas “fitness to practice” covers professional behaviour on site in a placement setting and speaks more to generalised competencies.
- iii) It is difficult to keep a proper record of information on a student case as communications are dispersed in multiple email trails. A new records’ keeping policy and an IT system should be put in place to address the difficulty. Student data should be securely stored and easily retrievable.

**Decision GS/23-24/151:** The committee endorsed the proposed changes to the “Fitness to Study” Policy for Council consideration.

The Dean thanked the Dean of Students for his informative presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/23-24/152 Discussion on “Industrial” PhD proposal - Memorandum from Prof. Sarah McCormack (School of Engineering DTLP) to present**

The Dean invited Prof. Sarah McCormack, School of Engineering DTLP, who reminded members that at the previous meeting in April, the proposal for industry/profession-focused PhD program was discussed and a number of issues were raised. To address the issues and move the proposal forward, she proposed a pilot program for an industry/profession-focused PhD option involving three Schools of Computer Science and Statistics, Engineering and Medicine. The pilot initiative aims to rebrand existing PhD structures to explicitly align PhD research with the evolving needs of external stakeholders, thereby enhancing the employability and practical skills of research graduates.

The proposed pilot will consist of identifying a broader title to encompass sector collaborations in the pilot Schools; reviewing current practices in the participating Schools to inform the pilot implementation and to differentiate from existing research funding schemes (e.g., IRC); identifying supervision requirements to support the new pathway; developing a marketing strategy to promote the rebranded program to target stakeholders; revising admissions criteria to include professional experience as a key consideration; and assessing the resources required to support the new pathway including industry engagement and streamlining academic supervision.

The committee has been asked to approve the pilot involving the three partner Schools wishing to refine the initiative as a cross-School project, aiming to iron out the details for the committee’s review prior to the opening of the next admissions cycle in November 2024 for entry in 2025/26.

In a short discussion which ensued several comments were made:

- 1) A query was raised whether the proposed new professional module would be mandatory or optional. It was suggested that the module will be compulsory during the pilot but optional if and when this model is rolled out across Schools.

- 2) A suggestion was made that the pilot should be discussed with the Academic Registry (AR) during its development. The AR are currently revising the online application form before the admissions cycle opens on the 1<sup>st</sup> November. It is now an opportune moment to bring in questions pertaining to the industry/profession-focused PhD into the application form. Although no structural elements of the PhD process will change, a way of identifying the cohort could be put into the application form to enable its subsequent tracking and reporting within SITS.
- 3) In the full PhD scenario, the industry/profession-focused PhD will have an employee status within their company but a student status in Trinity. A Non-EU PhD applicant will be coming through the company with a visa related to their work permit in Ireland. Such students come in on a visa sponsored by their company where they have company employee status and subsequently, they enrol as a PGR student in Trinity where they will have a student status.

**Decision GS/23-24/152:** The committee endorsed the proposed pilot for setting up an industry/profession-focused PhD programme involving three Schools of Computer Science and Statistics, Engineering and Medicine.

The Dean thanked Prof. McCormack for her continuing work on the project and wished the three Schools success with the pilot.

**XX GS/23-24/153 Horizon 2: PGR monthly update (May) – Ms Leona Coady, PG Renewal Programme Director, to present**

Ms Leona Coady, PG Renewal Programme Director, gave a brief overview of PG Renewal key achievements listed on the monthly slide for May. She referred in particular to Trinity Research Doctoral Awards and online application form enhancements.

In a short discussion which ensued a number of comments were made:

- 1) In response to a query as to how competitive Sanctuary award is, it was clarified that on the first deadline for applications for the award there were eight applications and hence the deadline was extended to bring more applications in.
- 2) Selection for School-based 24 awards is School-specific and can be based on the pre-selection of PI projects if that has been an ongoing practice in a given School so long as the process is transparent and competitive. The majority of Schools operate the student-based rather than PI-based application system.
- 3) In a situation when the student preferred by the School already holds a less lucrative IRC award, the latter award should be topped up to the same level from the TRDA but the TRDA remaining balance must be topped up again by the School when it is offered to another candidate; the School has to contribute the differential.

The Dean thanked the PG Renewal Programme Director for her update and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/23-24/154 HORIZON 2: Organisational Structures for PGR students - Discussion paper: Exploring reorganisation for postgraduate education in Trinity – Dean of Graduate Studies to present**

The Dean advised members that within a general 3<sup>rd</sup> level PGR context in the UK and Europe dedicated structures are in place that distinguish between PGR and PGT students. Trinity appears to have a traditional Office structure encompassing both under the one role of the Dean of Graduate Studies and is searching for a more modern organisational model to best support future PGR activities.

SUMS Consulting conducted a benchmarking study of organisational structures within research intensive universities. The study found that the growth in a range of issues across the sector, which cannot be solved at discipline level, requires a unified approach. Major strategic questions include the challenge of fostering interdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches; sustainability; widening participation and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); questions defined in increasingly ethical terms about long-term career prospects of PGR students. The SUMS Consulting benchmarking report recommended reorganisation of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies to optimise the Dean's role to support the PGR community in particular by focusing on developing innovative dedicated activities for PGR with delegated responsibility for owning strategy, leading on policy, and engaging with opportunities and threats to safeguard Trinity's national and global research competitiveness. The proposal presented to GSC proposed that consideration be given to the appointment of an Academic Officer to the role of Associate Dean for Postgraduate Taught activities to ensure that sufficient focus can be given to both discrete and shared issues across PGT and PGR cohorts.

The Dean opened the floor for discussion how best to develop the proposed reorganisation, taking into account that any revised structure must complement rather than duplicate or compete with School activities, and that it must add meaningful value. Members were also asked to advise the PG Renewal team as to who they should link in each School to progress the discussion in the coming months.

**Action GS/23-24/154 (i):** Members to advise the PG Renewal team who is a contact person in each School for the PG Renewal team to contact on the restructuring of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Members unanimously agreed that the proposed reorganisation pivoting around the PGR space was an excellent idea. Large Schools with numerous PGR students stand to benefit a lot from having a focus on the PGR sphere in the Dean's Office, particularly around the student life cycle. This however overlaps with the brief of the Dean of Research. For those members who view that the main point of doing a PhD is pursuing a research question, the primary output of the PhD endeavour is the thesis, and only thereafter comes the professional development of the research student. However, by carrying out research over 4 years the PGR student acquires additional skills and competencies growing as an individual which might not get reflected in the thesis. The potential to showcase that value-adding personal growth may be important from the student's career progression perspective. A suggestion that PGR development drive might shift from the Faculty towards the "Centre" has been discounted as support for the researcher's growth of skills and competencies should continue to be discipline-specific. A question arose whether there should be a similar separation of responsibility between PGR and PGT at School level as currently visible in a few though not all Schools, which have already Directors of PG Programmes in place. However, there is no College-mandated position for such a role as College requires only that each School has a Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) whose brief encompasses both PGR and PGT areas. It could well be that a natural consequence from the reorganisation of the Dean's Office might lead to a similar separation of DTLP briefs in all Schools. The Dean noted the problem within small Schools, where the number of roles continues to increase without a corresponding growth in the number of staff forcing junior academics to take on complex briefs.

The Dean thanked members for their contribution to the discussion.

**Action GS/23-24/154 (ii):** PG Renewal Team to liaise with Schools to explore potential organisational structures to support future PGR activities in College.



**GS/23-24/155 HORIZON 2: Conflict Management & Resolution in Research Supervision Relationship - Define, Measure and Analyse Stage Gate Dashboard - Seeking approval to proceed to design a Framework for Conflict Management – Ms Ewa Adach (Programme Analyst and Coordinator, PG Renewal) to present**

The Dean invited Ms Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal), to speak to the Agenda Item which followed GS/23-24/156. Ms Adach stated that Work Package 6 have progressed to a design phase having done extensive work on reviewing systems and supports for managing conflict that arises in supervision. Currently the path towards conflict resolution is not clearly marked with decentralised supports varying across Schools. As there is no mediation available unresolved issues escalate directly to the complaint stage. The WP#6 team aims to put in place procedures and structures to enable a local resolution of conflict, to set up resources offering impartial, independent and sustainable mediation supports and to initiate training for supervisors and students in the areas of conflict prevention, coaching and communication aimed at teaching them how to contain and resolve conflicts constructively. WP#6 have already engaged with a range of stakeholders and benchmarked the deliverable against comparator universities.

The committee has been asked to endorse that the work package proceed to mapping out an “ideal blueprint” of supports so that they be submitted for feedback at a future GSC meeting to decide which measures should be realistically prioritised and costed for implementation. Supports under consideration for inclusion comprise independent coaching service for students, development of Trinity guidelines for managing conflict in the supervisor/student relationship, an independent mediator for students and supervisors, a Faculty-level based Ombudsperson assisting in settling disputes, conflict management training for supervisors and students, and development of code of conduct guidelines.

In a discussion which followed the following comments were made:

- i) There appears to be some overlap between the initiative and the “fitness to study” area, but as the Postgraduate Student Support Officer engages with both he can provide feedback and minimise duplication between the two areas.
- ii) A Faculty-based Ombudsperson might not be sufficiently independent from the School influence while the current centrally based PG Advisory Support (PAS) operates independently across College. There may also be duplication between the two offices. Perhaps the PAS role should be enhanced with additional resources to carry out their brief at scale, or alternatively, an Ombudsperson might occupy a central position in College rather than being Faculty-based.
- iii) Allocating the conflict resolution task to an academic within the School, for example to the Director of PhD Programme, creates local interpersonal difficulties and therefore having an externally based single impartial body for conflict resolution is desirable.
- iv) Coaching should be firmly embedded in the final deliverable.
- v) The stakeholder consultation process will start again when the proposed design gets submitted for consideration by the committee at a future meeting.

The Dean thanked members for their feedback and concluded that the committee approved the proposal to proceed to a design of supports for supervisor-student conflict resolution.

**Decision GS/23-24/155:** The committee approved the proposal to proceed to a design of supports for supervisor-student conflict resolution.

**XX GS/23-24/156 HORIZON 2: Proposed design for a Triple I Framework (Conceptual Design Stage Gate Dashboard with supporting proposal) - Seeking approval to engage with students and**

**external stakeholders on design concept - Prof. Brian Broderick (Work Package#4 Member: Triple I) to present**

The Agenda Item was taken prior to GS/23-24/155. The Dean welcomed Prof. Brian Broderick, a WP#4 member, who spoke on behalf of Ms Orla Bannon, Work Package#4 Lead. Prof. Broderick outlined an emerging overall Triple I (International, Intersectoral, Interdisciplinary) conceptual framework to broaden out the range of experiences for PG students to enjoy while in Trinity aimed at improving their overall education and career prospects upon graduation. Students will have an opportunity to engage in an extensive range of activities linked to each of "I" and in line with the profile of their course of study at four different level of engagement (expose, experience, apply, extend).

In a short discussion which ensued, members shared their comments. The Triple I framework offers opportunities rather than obligations. Some of the proposed activities arise naturally as part of the research or taught course of study while others require additional investment of time and effort from the student, leading to a concern that perhaps a maximum amount of time should be estimated in terms of optimal time commitment recommended. As there is no obligation on any student to participate to any particular level in the suggested activities and the possible time commitment would vary between students, it might not be useful to indicate a recommended optimum. Some students might be within a dynamic study environment anyway without any additional need to enter into a structured Triple I programme. However, it may be useful to monitor that students do not spend too much time on those activities to the detriment of their course of study. Rather than adding additional activities, there may be opportunities to frame the naturally arising activities in terms of Triple I which students do as part of their course of study e.g., attending a conference can be labelled as International (I) category. Non-resident PhD students, who in some Schools such as English, have a strong role to play, need to be provisioned for without being present on site but still having a choice to participate in quality Triple I activities. Especially, Interdisciplinary activities can be set up at scale and delivered online to benefit students from multiple disciplines. Diversifying the range of learning experiences should effectively support opportunities for distance PGR students. The workload of setting up such experiences will then be shared amongst staff from a number of disciplines.

However, a member expressed concern with the proposed formalisation of opportunities which might be perceived by students as their entitlement. Members approved progressing the conceptual framework to wider consultation with students and staff in College, and external stakeholders (employers and society representatives) to ensure that the key stakeholders will have had input into the design process and its resulting deliverable.

**Decision GS/23-24/156:** The Committee approve progressing the conceptual framework for wider consultation in College, and with external stakeholders to flesh out the Triple I framework.

**XX GS/23-24/157 HORIZON 2: Student Lifecycle: Proposed design for new English Language Entry Requirements Framework Design Stage Gate Dashboard (with supporting proposal) - Seeking approval to proceed to Development Phase – Prof. Ashley Clements (Co-Lead, Work Package#1 PT Taught) to present**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Ashley Clements, a WP#1 Co-Lead, who took members through the proposed framework of three-banded (A, B and C with sub-scores within each band) English Language Requirements for admission designed in consultation with Prof. Lorna Carson, Director of the Trinity's Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching and the Admissions Office. The three bands are part of a larger project of proposed PG English language enhancements. In this future plan, developments under consideration include guidelines for staff and students for interviews

aimed at exploring applicants' language and academic preparedness, as well as a review of resource needs to support ongoing sustained development of English language skills for registered students. New PG course proposals will be required to indicate from the three bands their most appropriate level for English language entry. The proposal has already been approved by the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

In a discussion which ensued members supported the proposal. Feedback referred to applicants who frequently demonstrate an insufficient English competence revealed in an interview, although it has been acknowledged that the interviewing academic staff are not experts in assessing language competency. Standard tests, recognised as the international benchmarks, will continue to be used alongside interviews, and will not be replaced by an interview. The Dean clarified that supervisors do not have discretion to accept PGR applicants if they do not meet the threshold English language level, and any such recommendation will need to be approved by the Dean who needs to be convinced that the applicant is likely to succeed. It is intended that the new framework be implemented for the admissions cycle opening in November 2024 for entry into 2025/26.

The Dean thanked members for their feedback, Prof. Clements for his presentation and in particular Prof. Carson for her guidance on the WP#1 project.

**Decision GS/23-24/157:** The Committee approved the proposed three-band scale for English Language admission requirements and endorsed development of reports for monitoring and evaluation of applications presenting English language competency, and creating resources that offer interviewers guidelines for best practice in using interviews to assess language competency, and that offer interviewees resources for preparation.

**XX GS/23-24/158 HORIZON 2: Supervision: (i) Interim Review of PGR Student – Supervisor Agreement and Recommendations for approval; (ii) Proposed Guidelines for Teaching and Learning Supports Provided by PGR Students for approval - Prof. Rachel McLoughlin (Lead, Work Package#2 Research) to present**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Rachel McLoughlin, a WP#2 Research Lead, who spoke to both issues of the Agenda item.

(i) In reference to "Supervision Agreement – interim review" Prof. McLoughlin noted that students and supervisors who used the agreement over the past year have participated in focus group discussions resulting in a report which showed very positive feedback. However, many participants, particularly students, felt it was 'too early to say' whether the agreement would achieve the desired outcome, as they completed it very early in their programme of study. For that reason, the committee has been asked to extend the pilot for another year to include those already registered as well as any new TRDA entrants in 2024/25. Support resources will also be developed over the coming year. The committee has endorsed the proposed extension of the pilot for 2024/25. In a short discussion, note has been taken of concern expressed in relation to the permitted level of customisation of the agreement form - so long as no agreed boxes are removed, new boxes seeking additional information can be added. A member suggested that upon the discontinuation of the pilot the Supervision Agreement form should be rolled out as mandatory across College.

(ii) In reference to the "Guidelines on teaching and learning supports provided by PGR students" Prof. McLoughlin noted that in January 2024, Council approved the proposed approach to developing university-wide guidelines by the PG Renewal Programme. Due to a diversity of practices across Disciplines/Schools, Work Package #2 recognised the value of affording flexibility to Schools to provide teaching opportunities for PGR students appropriate to the disciplinary norms. However, to promote transparency, equity and fairness, Schools have been encouraged to customise and

communicate guidelines to their students. Such customised School guidelines should outline the expectations of students in delivering teaching activities within a specific School/Discipline, as well as the process of allocating such teaching responsibilities. The proposed guidelines aim to establish consistent baselines for what should constitute appropriate teaching and learning support experience for PGR students in Trinity. The guidelines are intended to promote equity and transparency across College, while safeguarding the research time needed to support academic progress. The circulated guidelines were considered at the PG Renewal Programme's Steering Committee and by the Student Forum. Further consultations with elected PGR reps in Schools, Students' Union and the College solicitor are planned over the summer. The GSC have been asked to provide further input and endorse the guidelines for submission to the June meeting of Council. If approved by the prescribed governance, the guidelines will be distributed to Schools ahead of the new academic 2024/25 year. In a short discussion which ensued, it was noted that no PG representation might be in place over the summer, and the WP#2 will have to engage with the Students' Union re resolving the issue.

The Dean thanked members for their feedback, Prof. McLoughlin for her presentation.

**Action GS/23-24/158:** (ii) Members to provide further input to WP#2 in relation to the "Guidelines on teaching and learning supports provided by PGR students" before their submission to the June Council.

**Decision GS/23-24/158:** (i) The Committee has endorsed the proposed extension of the pilot for 2024/25. (ii) The Committee has endorsed the "Guidelines on teaching and learning supports provided by PGR students" for submission to the June Council.

**XX GS/23-24/159 HORIZON 2: Student Lifecycle: Stage Gate Approval - Research Progression: Define and Measure & Analyse Phases Dashboard - Seeking approval to proceed to Design Phase - Ms Helen O'Hara (Lead, Work Package#3) to present and Mr Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager, PG Renewal Programme) to attend**

The Dean welcomed Ms Helen O'Hara, WP#3 Lead, and Mr Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager, PG Renewal Programme). Ms O'Hara spoke to the extensive work WP#3 has done to explore whether a development of a bespoke portal might be possible to automate many of the steps that currently have to be done manually on PGR progression. The ideal portal functionality, presented as combined Options 1, 2 and 3, will enable students to submit Progress/Confirmation reports to stakeholders, automated communications to share information/documentation, capturing and managing internal and external thesis committee members, capturing digital sign-off, activating user-friendly dashboard to ensure easy oversight of all the steps, and flagging students for progression to facilitate academic rollover. The WP#3 goal is that by August 2024, a solution will be proposed to reduce the time and administrative burden required to complete the PGR progression process by ensuring all necessary information is inputted and centrally stored, and by automating communication where possible. The proposed solution (if implemented) should ensure that 80% of PGR students are flagged for progression in SITS by the designated deadline which will enable PGR students to be invited to register on time.

Members endorsed the request for WP#3 to proceed to the design stage noting that just because it can be designed does not mean it can necessarily be implemented, as the design functionality will still need to be costed. The design will be considered by the September GSC before the WP#3 will proceed with developing an agreed and costed implementable solution.

The Dean thanked members for their feedback and Ms O'Hara for her presentation.

**Decision GS/23-24/159:** (i) The Committee endorsed the request for WP#3 to proceed to the design stage of a portal for PGR progression in SITS.

**XX GS/23-24/160 GSC Survey 2023/24 - Dean of Graduate Studies to present**

The Dean reminded members to complete an anonymous online Annual Survey 2023/24 evaluating the effectiveness of the GSC in conducting its business. She advised that members were requested to complete the survey by mid-June and responses would help with the future planning of GSC meetings.

**Action GS/23-24/160:** The GSC Annual Survey to be completed online by the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

**XX GS/23-24/161 Any Other Business**

Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services Representative, reminded members that the VLE is being reviewed. A number of possible proposals for its development were brought to the Planning Group for consideration as a multi-million and multi-annual project and a decision is pending. In the meantime, as an interim measure, the Planning Group has approved migration from the current Blackboard Learn to Blackboard Ultra with resulting interface changes to be implemented over the next two years. A pilot will take place in the Michaelmas Term 2024 with the roll out to follow. The full-scale implementation will conclude the following academic year. A more detailed update will be brought to the committee in October. In response to a query, Dr Bradley clarified that there is a clear process for giving external examiners access to Blackboard in Trinity and once that process is followed access to Blackboard Ultra should be unproblematic as there are no technical reasons for any impediments to occur. The Quality Office has a designated informative website which should be consulted, and IT Services can also be approached for additional guidance if required.

**XX Section B for Noting and Approval**

**XX GS/23-24/162 Calendar III changes for 2024/25: revised Appeals entry – Memorandum from Dean of Graduate Studies and Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer (Senior Tutor's Office)**

The committee endorsed a proposed new entry, revised after the April GSC, to the current Calendar regulations on Appeals seeking to limit the number of times a student can appeal against an outcome of assessment on the same module, but also ensuring that sufficient flexibility is retained to address those exceptional situations that emerge from time to time.

**Decision GS/23-24/162:** The committee recommended for Council approval the entry on Appeals in Calendar III for 2024/25 revised after the April GSC.

**XX GS/23-24/163 Combined Calendar III changes for 2024/25**

The Committee noted the proposed Calendar III changes for 2024/25 and checked that all changes from their respective Schools have been incorporated.

**Decision GS/23-24/163:** The committee recommended for Council approval the proposed Calendar III changes for 2024/25.

**XX GS/23-24/164 Revised Academic Integrity: Policy, Procedure and Curriculum Glossary – Memorandum from Dean of Graduate Studies, and Ms Lizzie Whitcher, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs, TT&L)**

The Committee noted a request to endorse three documents revised after the April meeting: (i) the Policy Review Record Sheet outlining the changes made to the Policy; (ii) the Academic Integrity Policy; (iii) the Procedure in cases of suspected academic misconduct. The Policy and the Procedure

document have been substantially revised. Much of what is now in the Procedures was formerly in the Calendar, so this is a far more streamlined way of ensuring that the Calendar specifies regulations, and the Policy and Procedure documentation sets out how those regulations operate. The request was endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/164:** The committee recommended for Council approval the Policy Review Record Sheet outlining the changes made to the Policy; the Academic Integrity Policy and the Procedure in cases of suspected academic misconduct revised after the April GSC.

**GS/23-24/165 Request for cessation from 2024/25 of the M.Ed. Strand in Positive Behaviour Management from School of Education**

The Committee noted a request from the School of Education for cessation from 2024/25 of the M.Ed. Strand in Positive Behaviour Management on the grounds that the reference to 'positive behaviour management' in education has become obsolete, and pedagogically speaking, the strand is no longer relevant. The request was endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/165:** The committee recommended for Council approval the cessation from 2024/25 of the M.Ed. Strand in Positive Behaviour Management.

**GS/23-24/166 Request for suspension in 2024/25 of PGCert (21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning) from School of Education**

The Committee noted a request from the School of Education for suspension in 2024/25 of PGCert (21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning) on financial grounds. The request was endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/166:** The committee recommended for Council approval the suspension in 2024/25 of PGCert (21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning) on financial grounds.

**GS/23-24/167 Request from School of Nursing and Midwifery for cessation from 2024/25 of Gerontological Nursing strand within MSc in Nursing: Specialist Nursing (DPTNM-SNUR-1SNU) and reopening MSc in Gerontological Nursing (DPTNMG TNU-1P09) from 2024/25**

The Committee noted a request from the School of Nursing and Midwifery for cessation from 2024/25 of Gerontological Nursing strand within MSc in Nursing: Specialist Nursing (DPTNM-SNUR-1SNU) and reopening MSc in Gerontological Nursing from 2024/25 as follows: 1) Traditional structure of 2-year part time M.Sc. in Gerontological Nursing with an exit Postgraduate Diploma in Gerontological Nursing [DPTNU-GTNU-1P09] and 2) Framework structure of 3-year part time M.Sc. in Gerontological Nursing with a direct entry only via the Postgraduate Certificate in Gerontological Nursing (year 1) [DPCNM-GTNU-1P09], progression to year 2 to Postgraduate Diploma top up, part time [DPDNU-GTNU-2P09], subsequent progression to year 3 to Masters top up part time [DPTNM-GTNU-2P09]. The strand has under-recruited in recent years as it lacks visibility embedded as a strand. To address that and to capitalise on an HSE-driven funding opportunity, the School wishes to cease the strand and instead to re-activate the legacy MSc in Gerontological Nursing programme. The request was endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/167:** The committee recommended for Council approval the cessation from 2024/25 of Gerontological Nursing strand within MSc in Nursing: Specialist Nursing (DPTNM-SNUR-1SNU) and reopening MSc in Gerontological Nursing (DPTNMG TNU-1P09) from 2024/25.

**GS/23-24/168 Request for suspension in 2024/25 of Micro-credential (NU9MC2) Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse from School of Nursing and Midwifery**

The Committee noted a request to suspend the MC (NU9MC2) in 2024/25 on the grounds that the Micro-credential leader is no longer available to lead and deliver the MC. The request was endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/168:** The committee recommended for Council approval the suspension of the MC in Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse (NU9MC2) in 2024/25.

**GS/23-24/169 Request for suspension in 2024/25 of Master in Education Studies (Leadership in Christian Education) - Memorandum from Dr Seán Delaney, MIE Registrar**

The Committee noted a request to suspend the in person course in 2024/25 aimed to provide the Marino Institute of Education (MIE) with an opportunity to review the success of the new online version of the programme to commence in September 2024. MIE obtained permission for suspension of the face-to-face MES in Leadership in Christian Education in 2023/24 and is seeking to extend it for 2024/25. The course has never run since it was approved. The MES in Christian School Leadership is an online format of the MES in Leadership in Christian Education. The request was endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/169:** The committee recommended for Council approval the request to suspend the in person Master in Education Studies (Leadership in Christian Education) in 2024/25.

**GS/23-24/170 Request for approval of new Programme Outcomes from 2024/25 for Undergraduate and Postgraduate programme: Pharmacy (Integrated) (BSc Pharm and MPharm) from School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences**

The Committee noted proposed changes to the Integrated MPharm programme (consisting of the BSc Pharm and the MPharm) to commence from 2024/25 aimed at streamlining, removing repetition, and facilitating programme-focused assessment, integrating the new mandatory Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists published by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. There are no changes to any of the current Modules or Module Learning Outcomes as a result of the proposed new Programme Outcomes. The proposed changes pertaining to the MPharm were endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/170:** The committee recommended for Council approval the proposed new Programme Outcomes pertaining to the MPharm.

**GS/23-24/171 Changes to Calendar III Section for validated PGT courses in 2024/25 from MIE and RIAM Memorandum from Prof. Neville Cox (Registrar)**

The Committee noted changes to Calendar III Section for Validated PGT Courses in 2024/25 from MIE and RIAM approved respectively by the MIE ACDC on 2 May 2024 and the RIAM ACDC on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024. The proposed changes were endorsed to proceed to Council via the GSC May draft minutes.

**Decision GS/23-24/171:** The committee recommended for Council approval the proposed changes to Calendar III Section for validated PGT courses in 2024/25 from MIE and RIAM approved respectively by the MIE ACDC on 2 May 2024 and the RIAM ACDC on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

**GS/23-24/172 Request for suspension in 2024/25 of Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (PCIA-IENT-1P) from Tangent**

The Committee noted a request to suspend the Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (PCIA-IENT-1P) for 2024/25 on the grounds that Tangent income from PG courses as confirmed by HEA for that year will be insufficient to cover the cost of the course. Alternative funding models will be explored the following year to reinstate the course. The Tangent Academic Oversight Committee considered the proposal on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024, and while the committee expressed regret at the suspension, the proposal has been endorsed. Approval from GSC is sought provisional to the approval of the HCI steering committee, who will meet on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**Decision GS/23-24/172:** The committee recommended for Council approval the suspension of the Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (PCIA-IENT-1P) for 2024/25.

## **XX Section C for Noting**

### **GS/23-24/173 HORIZON 2: Interim Review of Board-approved proposals for financing of PGR Students (TRDA & Fee Differential Write-down) - Memorandum from Dean of Graduate Studies and PR Programme Director to Finance Committee**

Members were presented for information with an interim review conducted by the PG Renewal team of the financial measures approved by the Board in February 2023 for financing PGR students. A further review of the value and impact of the measure will be conducted following the third intake to the PhD register in September 2024 and recommendations will be brought forward at that point as to its future. It is anticipated that the review will be presented to the Finance Committee at its May meeting, and subsequently potentially to the Planning Group and Board.

### **GS/23-24/174 Report from Academic Integrity Steering Group - Dean of Graduate Studies to update**

The Dean updated members on the work of the AISG, future plans and the draft report that Ms Lizzie Whitcher, Education Policy Developer, Academic Affairs (TT&L), has collated. The draft report on the work completed by the AISG will be reviewed at the last AISG meeting for submission to Council. The AISG will change its members with a shift of focus towards GenAI, and it is anticipated that the schedule of meetings will change.

### **GS/23-24/175 Results of Trinity Graduate Outcomes Survey: Report on Class of 2022 and Summary of Trinity Careers Service Activity in 2022/23**

The Graduate Outcomes Survey Report on Class of 2022 and the accompanying snapshot of Careers Service Activity Statistics for 2022/23 were circulated to members. 80% of Trinity PG graduates were either in employment or due to start a job within 3 months of graduating, and the proportion of those employed in Ireland is close to 70% - marking a real shift since the economic downturn. Compared to other HEIs, Trinity is slightly below the national average and that difference is not attributable to a larger proportion going on to or remaining in further study. Trinity's overall student cohort is highly international – which may account for some of this difference. The differences in employment by programme (research, taught) was also visible in the report. 85% of Trinity PhD graduates were in employment, with 28% having gone on to Post-Doc positions (compared to a national average of 12.6%). A more rounded discussion on the report data is planned for a future meeting in 2024/25.

### **GS/23-24/176 Draft Minutes of Royal Irish Academy of Music Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM ACDC) of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024**

The draft minutes of RIAM ACDC of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 were circulated to members.



**GS/23-24/177 Draft Minutes of Marino Institute of Education Associated College Degrees Committee (MIE) ACDC of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**

The draft minutes of MIE ACDC of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 were circulated to members.

**GS/23-24/178 Minutes of Lir Academy Joint Academic Committee of 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

The minutes of Lir Academy Joint Academic Committee of 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were circulated to members.

**GS/23-24/179 Draft Minutes of Lir Academy Joint Academic Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

The draft minutes of Lir Academy Joint Academic Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 were circulated to members.

**GS/23-24/180 Submission from PG Representatives on GSC**

Submission from PG Representatives on GSC in relation to the University's response to student protests earlier in May was circulated to members. The postgraduate representatives wished to submit an item for discussion at GSC related to the protests. However, at the last Council meeting, the Provost stated that there will be an opportunity for a full discussion of all the issues associated with the protest once discussions have concluded. For that reason, it was not appropriate to put the submission on the Agenda. Instead, the Dean has approved that the document be circulated for members' review, so that if they wish to have informal discussions, they have visibility on the students' current perspectives.

The Dean thanked all the committee members. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 13.05pm.

Prof. Martine Smith

Date: 23 May 2024