



**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 on Thursday 17 October 2024

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**XX = Council relevance**

*Present (Ex officio):*

Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair)

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

Professor Wladislaw Rivkin, Trinity Business School  
Professor Gavin Doherty, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
Professor Evangelia Rigaki, School of Creative Arts  
Professor Padhraig Fleming, School of Dental Science  
Professor Noel Ó Murchadha, School of Education  
Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, School of Engineering  
Professor Jane Suzanne Carroll, School of English  
Professor Rachel Moss, School of Histories & Humanities  
Professor Jennifer Edmond, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies  
Professor David Prendergast, School of Law  
Professor Paul Conroy, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences  
Professor Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics  
Professor Stephen Maher, 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 Graham Cross, School of Physics  
Professor Frédérique Vallieres, School of Psychology  
Professor Etain Tannam, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies  
Professor Selim Gulesci, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy  
Professor Eavan Brady, School of Social Work & Social Policy  
Professor Ana Perez-Luno, Academic Director, Portal

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

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)

Not in attendance – Vacant:

TCDSU/AMLCT PGR Representative

TCDSU/AMLCT PGT Representative

*TCD SU representative on behalf of postgraduate students – in attendance for all items:*

*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  
Ms Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary – Academic Affairs

*In attendance for Postgraduate Renewal Items:*

Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal)

*Apologies:*

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research  
Professor Rachel Mc Loughlin, School of Biochemistry & Immunology  
Professor Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry  
Professor Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics & Microbiology  
Mr Eoghan Gilroy, SU Education Officer  
Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L)  
Aoife Kelly, Programme Administrator (PG Renewal)

*In attendance for individual items:*

Prof. Siobhán Garrigan, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies for item GS/24-25/018  
Dr Graham Glanville, RPL Project Lead: Recognition of Prior Learning (TT&L) for item GS/24-25/019  
Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer, Academic Affairs (TT&L) for item GS/24-25/020  
Prof. Vincent Wade, Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies for items GS/24-25/021 and GS/24-25/022

**XX Section A**

**XX GS/24-25/016 Minutes of GSC of 19 September 2024**

The minutes were approved as circulated.

**XX GS/24-25/017 Matters Arising**

The Dean advised members that all Actions from the September 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 16<sup>th</sup> October. Matters Arising were closed off and covered in the Dean's memorandum circulated in advance of the meeting.

**XX GS/24-25/018 New course proposal: MPhil in Theology and Social Justice – Prof. Siobhán Garrigan, Course Director (School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies) to present**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Siobhán Garrigan, prospective Course Director, and noted that the proposed course was the first full proposal to have come through the new pilot 2-stage approval process. Enhancements will still need to be made to the template, but the proposal shows improved conciseness and clarity of the programme structure layout. The Dean stated that the proposed course is to be offered as a full-time 90 ECTS MPhil over one year, and as a part-time Framework structure of PgCert, PgDip top up, MPhil top up over three years, accruing 30 ECTS each year. Taught modules are a mixture of core and electives, and each has a credit volume of 10 ECTS. The PgCert comprises only core modules while the PgDip top up is made up of three electives. In terms of marketing, the course targets five potential student cohorts and accordingly, it has been designed with their needs in focus. The aim is to commence the course in September 2025 with a minimum recruitment target of 6 students in year 1, potentially rising to 19 over a 5-year plan. In line with its social justice focus, placements are incorporated into the curriculum, although there is currently no plan for internships. Graduates will be well placed for employment in diverse areas including charity leadership, civil service, teaching, chaplaincy, religious ministry, journalism, law, and social enterprise.

Prof. Garrigan noted that the programme is underpinned by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, and the curriculum has been structured to be inclusive and accessible giving all students equal opportunities to learn. The teaching strategy emphasizes experiential learning, critical reflection, and dialogical engagement. Assessment formats are diverse and do not include end-of-year examinations. The admissions criteria and assessment regulations are in line with other similar programmes.

Prof. Garrigan asked for feedback on the proposed programme, and the following discussion ensued:

- 1) The proposed Research Methods module offered “not for credit” was queried. The Dean suggested that the module content should be incorporated into the Dissertation module of 30 credits as a module component either with some minimal notional credit within the overall module credit volume or without any credit on the understanding that how well students have mastered the research methods will show via the dissertation output. Learning outcomes associated with the proposed Research Methods module will need to be re-allocated to the Dissertation module. Some DTLPs reported on similar practices in their Schools.
- 2) Prof. Garrigan explained that the proposed course follows in the footsteps of a previous similar Masters course in Theology and Social Justice offered in the past in All Hallows College which was discontinued when that College was combined into DCU. The proposed course will therefore be unique in Ireland.
- 3) To the suggestion that the course title be reconsidered as “Social Justice and Theology” to appeal to a wider public without clerical institutional allegiance, Prof. Garrigan responded that “theology” is perceived as linked to the ecclesial institutional context in Ireland. Through the choice of title, the School aims to highlight the critical analysis of theology as a legitimate academic subject of study.
- 4) In response to a query, Prof. Garrigan has undertaken to insert a progression regulation on distinction in PgCert, and reassessment and compensation rules for students failing modules.
- 5) The programme will be offered within existing resources in the School without increasing the staff workload as additional teaching capacity will be released by the planned consolidation of the UG degree and the involvement in the teaching of the Director of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice which works to combat injustice and marginalisation in Irish society, through social analysis, education and advocacy.
- 6) Teaching and learning strategy and the innovative assessment have been complemented on.
- 7) With respect to the query pertaining to the course finances, the Dean clarified that the business case template has been signed off by the Faculty Dean and Finance Partner, and therefore no amendments there are required, and unlike the other recommended changes, they do not need to be re-visited in terms of the proposal that will come forward for review. The GSC do not consider finances in the course proposals, accepting the sign off on the business case from the Faculty Office.

**Action GS/24-25/018:** Prof. Garrigan to revise the proposal in line with the committee’s recommendations and re-submit the revised version to the next meeting for a final sign off and recommendation to Council without a requirement for the proposed course director to attend the meeting.

The Dean thanked Prof. Garrigan for her presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/24-25/019 Revised Policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Memorandum from Dr Graham Glanville, RPL Project Lead: Recognition of Prior Learning (TT&L)**

The Dean welcomed Dr Graham Glanville, RPL Project Lead, who noted that the Trinity RPL Working Group, chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies, carried out a comprehensive RPL Policy Review from September 2023 to July 2024 through engagement with key RPL policy stakeholders such as the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Academic Affairs and Quality Office staff, Portal and School representatives: Professors, Programme Managers, Administrators, School Managers, DUTLs and DTLPs and National RPL group of 14 HEIs participating in the Higher Education Project. The review has been undertaken in the context of a national focus on RPL under the HCI initiative, enhancing the policy aim of increasing access to education across the FE and HEI sector nationally.

The resulting amendments comprised minor enhancements to definitions and terminology associated with RPL (now aligned with the Pilot Framework for RPL in Higher Education published in 2022), the inclusion of NFQ level descriptors in the assessment of RPL, the inclusion of Micro-credentials in the policy scope and the addition of Course Coordinator as an alternate to Course Director to reflect School practices. The same policy applies across PGT and UG admissions although the volume of admissions involving RPL is much higher within the PGT space. Work has been in progress to develop support tools for Schools to reduce time required to evaluate experiential learning. Schools will be offered customised training. The policy revisions will require recommendation from GSC and USC for Council approval in November. The GSC was additionally tasked to consider an issue of bringing NFQ Level 10 awards into the RPL policy.

The RPL Project Lead asked for feedback on the proposed extension of the RPL policy to cover NFQ Level 10 awards, and the following discussion ensued:

- 1) Currently, there is an option for any applicant to register on Research Masters at NFQ Level 9 for a year with a view to subsequently transferring to the PhD register at NFQ Level 10. NFQ Level 10 awards have been explicitly left out of the policy.
- 2) Research funding is only available to PhD students and there is no research funding for students on Research Masters at NFQ Level 9. However, the SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) awarding authority for further and higher education grants pays fees at NFQ Level 9 for eligible means-tested students.
- 3) Successful examples of students in the past admitted to the Research Masters register without formal education, transferring to the PhD and subsequently pursuing academic careers have been referred to.
- 4) Having a targeted step up from initial Research Masters onto the PhD register is a useful safety mechanism for students admitted without an UG degree.
- 5) Admission to a professional doctorate without an UG degree would not be possible as specific admissions criteria are very stringently defined by professional bodies accrediting the programme.
- 6) Undertaking a PhD is a strenuous academic activity for any student but especially for an applicant without an UG degree demonstrating their achievement in the academic domain; such applicants can still apply for admissions to the Research Masters to evidence their academic potential and progress to the PhD rather than failing it if they could not cope with its demands.
- 7) Including direct admissions to the PhD register under the RPL might raise applicants' expectations and create significant challenges for Schools to navigate.
- 8) Many Schools currently use the UG degree as a filter for PhD admissions.

The discussion concluded with agreement not to include direct admissions to the PhD register at NFQ Level 10 for applicants without an UG degree.

In response to a separate query the Dean confirmed that the RPL policy allows credit exemption to a maximum of 10 credits applicable post-admission on PGT courses of fewer than 120 ECTS. The advanced entry does not apply to PGT courses unless they are of two years' duration with 120 ECTS.

**Decision GS/24-25/019 (i):** The committee agreed not to include direct admissions to the PhD register at NFQ Level 10 for applicants without an UG degree.

**Decision GS/24-25/019 (ii):** The committee agreed to recommend for Council approval the revised RPL policy with an unchanged section 7.2.

The Dean thanked the RPL Project Lead for his presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/24-25/020 Review of Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy and related Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students Policy – Memorandum from Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs in TT&L)**

The Dean welcomed Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer, Academic Affairs (TT&L) who noted that the Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy was last reviewed in 2021/22. Since then, a number of updates have been made to the guidelines and processes that support research supervision in Trinity, arising from the work of the PG Renewal Project. These include (i) the introduction of the pilot Supervisor-Research Student Agreement, (ii) clarification of the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, PGR students and Thesis Committees at key points in the progression journey, and (iii) the development of Terms of Reference for Thesis Committees. Resources for supervisors have been made available on the Graduate Studies website.

All policies are looked at every three years, and the Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy is due for review in 2024/25. Some initial changes to it reflecting the developments under the PG Renewal, the PG Research Handbook, the Research Supervision Guidelines, the Thesis Committee Guidelines and information on the Graduate Studies website were included as tracked changes in the circulated version. Members were invited to consider what additional or alternative updates are required. The Dean recommended that one overarching broad term of Postgraduate Research Students should be used throughout the policy in place of PhD students.

The Education Policy Developer asked for feedback on the proposed amendments to the Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy, and the following discussion ensued:

- 1) The potential ambiguity of the term “independent academic member of staff” was queried (i.e., independent in terms of the PhD research project or in the status of the staff member).
- 2) Terminology to identify different supervisor types will be developed outside the policy.
- 3) Reference to external supervisor should be considered for inclusion, noting that academic decisions related to students' progress are the responsibility of the internal supervisor. The Dean will suggest wording for the insert to check with members being mindful of the academic autonomy.

**Action GS/24-25/020 (i):** The Dean to suggest wording for the insert to check with members on external/internal supervisor's role on the PhD project.

**Action GS/24-25/020 (ii):** Members to propose amendments to the Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy to the Education Policy Developer.

- 4) Further clarification is required on the “research active” status of staff in the context of maternity leave and other circumstances affecting academics' engagement with research.

- 5) Reference to “joint supervision” terminology should be followed through on all PGR forms.

The Education Policy Developer stated that while reviewing the Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy, it is opportune to also review the related Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students Policy which applies to students on a traditional PhD register who seek permission to be absent from the university for an extended period of at least 6 months within their 4 years to undertake aspects of their research such as data collection (which is a different cohort to those registered on the Non-resident PhD pathway from the start). Two specific changes (related to 7.1.2 and 7.3.1) were suggested in the circulated version, and members were invited to consider what further updates could be included. The Dean noted that the policy was developed pre-Covid and was therefore not informed by the online experience gathered during the pandemic. Provisions under 7.1.2 and 7.3.1 appear to be, respectively, unreasonable and too onerous, and should be pragmatically reconsidered either by being deleted or having alternative arrangements requiring less supervisory monitoring of remote students.

The Dean asked for feedback on the proposed amendments to the Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students Policy, and the following discussion ensued:

- 1) The policy comes across as punitive for the student and the supervisor.
- 2) Academic reasons for being away from Dublin are important but the policy should also cover students who have to live outside Dublin for *ad mis* family or financial reasons but who are still sufficiently self-motivated to deliver on their research outputs in a timely manner.
- 3) Local co-supervision is a reasonable support to secure for a student who goes away to work in a lab in a foreign country.
- 4) There are too many safeguards required to be put in place to accommodate requests from remote students and therefore a thorough review of the policy needs to be undertaken.
- 5) The policy should also cover physical remoteness of supervisors who have gone away on a visiting fellowship for example while their students are still based in Trinity.

**Action GS/24-25/020 (iii):** Members to propose amendments to the Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students Policy to the Education Policy Developer contributing towards comprehensive policy review.

**Decision GS/24-25/020:** Both policies (Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students Policy and Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy) to be amended in light of the feedback to be received to be finalised at a future Graduate Studies Committee meeting.

The Dean thanked the Education Policy Developer for her presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/24-25/021 Learning Innovation and Research Hub – Memorandum from Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary (TT&L) and Prof. Vincent Wade, Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Vincent Wade, the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Ms Patricia Callaghan, the Academic Secretary. The Academic Secretary noted that a learning innovation and research hub has been in development for some time. She spoke to the circulated proposal, put together by the Learning Lab Advisory Group, which assessed the viability of a hub that aims to maximise teaching and learning resources in Trinity to provide a test-platform for teaching innovation, drawing on the expertise of Academic Practice in collaboration with other units in College. In particular, the Academic Secretary referred to the proposal as an objective of the College 2020-2025 strategic plan and outlined the ambition to coordinate existing teaching and learning resources across units in College to enhance coherence. Seven recommendations for Council

approval were put forward to the committee for consideration together with a proposal for a 2 year feasibility study aiming to define a structure (i.e., the proposed Hub) that empowers Trinity academic staff, teaching and learning support staff, and students to respond to educational challenges by (co)researching pedagogical and digital learning innovations, evaluating and, as appropriate, integrating successful innovations within Trinity curricula.

Members' feedback was sought on the proposal. In a discussion which ensued the following comments were made:

- 1) The Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies clarified that the aim of the Hub is to be proactive and reach out to Schools rather than expecting that Schools will reach out to the Hub.
- 2) The Hub would run programmes and academics will apply for funding and time to participate in them.
- 3) The Hub is envisaged as a College-wide centre that any academic can consult, to obtain support in pedagogical research and embed learning from that research locally in Schools.
- 4) A diversity of projects will be supported with innovations ranging from GenAI to large class teaching delivery.
- 5) The Hub will run end of semester/year events to illustrate and popularise its projects amongst the wide College community with a view to encouraging the mainstreaming of transferable projects.
- 6) Given the diversity of PG student backgrounds and their learning duration in College, it would be helpful for the proposed Teaching and Learning Advisory Group to include a representative specifically focusing on the PG space. Innovations for PG students differ from those for UG students.
- 7) TBS has the highest proportion of PGT students in College and collaborates with a number of accrediting bodies which promote teaching and learning innovation and have already developed numerous useful resources accessible in the public domain for consultation; Trinity's Hub could review and avail of these resources.
- 8) The proposed Hub in Trinity will also have access to teaching and learning innovation resources being developed by LERU partner universities. The Dean of Graduate Studies is already a member of the LERU Doctoral Studies group.

**Decision GS/24-25/021:** The Committee endorsed a Learning Innovation & Research Hub for Council approval together with the seven recommendation and a 2 year feasibility study put forward by the Learning Lab Advisory Group.

The Dean thanked the Academic Secretary for her presentation and the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies and committee members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/24-25/022 College statement on AI and GenAI - Prof. Vincent Wade, Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies**

Prof. Vincent Wade, the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies stayed on to speak to the Agenda item on AI and GenAI. The Dean of Graduate Studies noted that the committee reviewed an earlier version of the Institutional Statement on AI and GenAI at its May meeting the previous academic year. She invited the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies to speak to the statement since significantly revised with feedback received through consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including most recently USC. The draft presented to GSC for input will be also considered by the Research Committee before being finalised for Council.

The Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that some Schools have initiated work on developing local policies on the use of Gen AI, and therefore there was a need for an overarching

College statement connecting College values and mission with associated uses of AI/GenAI being articulated by Schools. The institutional statement provides guidance for staff and students delivering teaching, supporting learning and carrying out research activities, for students (most of whom are using GenAI) in their learning domain and for professional services staff. It outlines Trinity's position on the principles underpinning appropriate use of GenAI. A resource website, called the GenAI Teaching and Learning Hub, with examples of use and FAQ is being developed for the College community. Students in Trinity have direct access to GenAI via Microsoft 365 Copilot; they can also subscribe privately to other software which College cannot restrict. Given the rapidly evolving technology underpinning AI and GenAI, the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies underlined that the Statement is a living document and will change as practices and understanding of the technology evolve and as other related College policies are published. Future updates to the College Statement will be brought to the committee for consideration.

Members' feedback was sought on the proposed Institutional Statement. In a discussion which ensued the following comments were made:

- 1) The School of Law DTLP welcomed the drafting of the AI/GenAI policy and suggested including an explicit statement in it that the AI policy is subject to a core principle respecting academic freedom. Legitimate space should be preserved for academics who, for pedagogical reasons and/or ethical reasons, are not inclined to encourage or require students to engage with AI such as large language models. While the draft policy notes "challenges and risks" arising from AI in regard to sustainability and research ethics, these are in truth actual costs - they are ongoing materialised risks, not mere potential risks - since the energy consumption from cloud computing, and GenAI in particular, is massive and the large language models have already instrumentalised the works of many authors of the past for their own machine learning without the authors' consent (unlike nowadays where authors can choose to consent to this in publishing agreements).

The Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the current draft does not preclude or mandate the use of AI/GenAI but puts principles in place when the use is taking place. It contains a specific paragraph on restrictions on the use of GenAI in student assessment on page 2 ("respecting where disciplines or degree programmes require specific restrictions in GenAI usage in assessment preparation and execution"). However, the query was re-articulated to state that the College position on the use of GenAI is subject to guaranteeing academic freedom and cannot undermine it, and this should be explicitly recognised as a stand-alone principle. The Dean of Graduate Studies noted that the Institutional Statement presumes that AI/GenAI is used in College and therefore such an insert might be a useful clarification.

**Action GS/24-25/022 (i):** The School of Law DTLP to provide draft wording for the principle of safeguarding academic freedom in the Institutional Statement.

- 2) The Academic Integrity Week has been in progress and members were invited to attend outstanding public training/information sessions on GenAI.
- 3) Academics should be mindful of the ongoing need to assess submitted work for any example of a breach of academic integrity, including the use of GenAI tools without appropriate authorisation or referencing. Where concerns arise, an academic integrity meeting should be called. The Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies also recommended setting more reflexive tasks to students for assessment to minimise the value of GenAI in completing them.
- 4) Academic Practice has been collating examples on the use of GenAI for uploading on the GenAI Hub to highlight some of the risks from real life situations.
- 5) Defining GenAI as a sub-area of AI "generating content" may not be sufficiently clear to students who use other AI technologies like Grammarly which also generates content. Perhaps



guidelines around what “kind of content” is legitimate might be useful to delineate the red line between the acceptable content and non-acceptable content. The Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that an exhaustive fine-grain definition is difficult to formulate, and the GenAI Hub will instead provide examples of what might be considered acceptable or plagiarism from a GenAI source.

**Action GS/24-25/022 (ii):** Members were asked to contribute further feedback on the current Institutional Statement draft.

The Dean thanked the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies for his presentation and committee members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/24-25/023 Library Life Pulse Survey 2023/24: findings and action plan - Ms Siobhan Dunne, Deputy Head of Readers' Services (Teaching, Research and User Experience) to present**

The Dean welcomed Ms Siobhan Dunne, Deputy Head of Readers' Services (Teaching, Research and User Experience) who noted that the Library issued its biennial “Library Life Pulse” survey carried out from the 20<sup>th</sup> November to the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 which received 1,048 responses. The Deputy Head of Readers' Services referred members to a detailed action plan charting progress across the four key themes (training and support, space, finding and accessing resources and services and communications) available as a ‘You Said, We Did’ resource on the Library website. The resource also includes feedback received in response to two new open-ended survey questions reflecting the Library’s cross cutting strategic imperatives, ‘Sustainability’ and ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion’ (Continuity and Development of the Library Strategy – 2026). In the months following the survey, several focus groups and design thinking workshops have been undertaken to further explore the survey themes with students but specific activities focusing on PG students still remain to be put in place. Members were asked to consider the survey findings and the Library’s response to the actions undertaken regarding the survey findings in relation to the PG student community.

The Deputy Head of Readers' Services asked for feedback on the action plan, and the following discussion ensued:

- 1) The short loan space, used in the past primarily by students from very few disciplines, is being redeveloped and re-imagined and possibly will be integrated into the main collection.
- 2) The survey did not specifically focus on postgraduate students off campus affiliated to hospitals without a reasonable access to the library and therefore such data is not available but off campus students’ needs are very specific and have to be called out in order not to be overlooked. Requests for access from such cohorts have been coming in and registered students have automatic access to the e-collection. Medical librarians reach out to medical students to provide targeted resource training. PG students tend not to use the medical library in St. James’s because it is small and overcrowded with UG students during term-time.
- 3) No survey data is available on the use of the library by non-resident PhD students and online PGT students. Anecdotal evidence suggest that they use the library when they come in person to Trinity.

The Dean thanked the Deputy Head of Readers' Services for her presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/24-25/024 Horizon 2: PGR monthly update (October) – 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 October. She referred in particular to the launching of

TRDA 2025/26 in early November and upcoming PGR student journey mapping via staff/student focus groups with a view to subsequently creating an organisational entity around the PGR activity,

**Action GS/24-25/024:** DTLPs were asked to volunteer to assist in identifying representatives from each Faculty (a PGR student, DTLP, supervisor, School admin supporting PGR) for in-person academic staff/support staff related focus groups either on the 6<sup>th</sup> or the 8<sup>th</sup> November. Communication from the Dean will be circulated to DTLPs shortly.

The updated PG application form goes live on the 4<sup>th</sup> November when the recruitment to the 2025/26 academic year will commence. The Dean thanked the PG Renewal Programme Director for her update.

**XX GS/24-25/025 HORIZON 2: Review of PGR supervision and assessment updates - Ms Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal; WP#2) to present**

The Dean invited Ms Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal). Last year, GSC approved a wide range of updates and revisions of resources linked to supervision, thesis committees, annual review of progress, confirmation processes, as well as associated reports. WP#2 are interested in understanding what DTLPs' experience has been in engaging with the revised processes and documents in order that they can better understand how the changes have been working for Schools. Ms Adach sought feedback on a number of questions on behalf of WP#2.

In the course of an interactive survey exercise

- 1) a member noted that sometimes it was not easy to find up to date forms online. The Dean advised that Graduate Studies website is under reconstruction and will display a designated folder for forms to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.
- 2) In response to a query, the Dean clarified that she has no targeted email account for PGR students in respective Schools and therefore she contacts School DTLPs to pass on her specific message to their students when it is local rather than general in character. The Dean does not have access to School by School email lists. Only her communications to the wide PG student body go out via a College-based general PG email account.
- 3) Anecdotally, a member shared a view that particularly PGR students are more likely to open messages originating from their own Schools rather than from the front of College. The Postgraduate Student Support service also communicates via DTLPs.
- 4) Some Schools have set up a non-credit bearing module on Blackboard and has put all its resources on it. Students receive announcements through Blackboard, and also retain a record of those notifications.

The Dean thanked the Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal) for setting up the interactive survey and members for their feedback and contribution to the discussion.

**XX GS/24-25/026 Any Other Business**

The Dean of Graduate Studies updated members on the following issues.

**i) Virtual Learning Environment (VLE):** No change in 2024/25; transitioning to the new Blackboard (Ultra) in 2025/26.

**ii) HCI Funding:** Contrary to expectations, there will be no second round HCI funding. The current HCI funding stream will terminate in March 2025.

**iii) Irish Universities Association (IUA) collaboration:** A project is under way around students with disabilities particularly in the PGR space and the Dean will bring further updates to the committee as

the project progresses during the academic year. In addition, HEIs will be developing proposals for some pooling of resources in relation to PGR supervision supports.

**iv) Research Assessment Workshop:**

There are two upcoming events in the Royal Irish Academy. One is the Research Assessment Workshop; names have been selected by HEA from the submitted nominations and students were invited to participate in the event. The second event is the national final of the three-minute thesis. A PhD student from Medicine will represent Trinity at the event. Ten seats are allocated to each university and the Dean has asked DTLPs to spread the information amongst PGR students in their Schools to encourage them to participate in the event.

**v) LERU Doctoral Summer School:**

The LERU School will take place in Copenhagen in June 2025 around the theme of Artificial Intelligence across University disciplines. Two PhD students can be nominated from Trinity; priority is given to PhD students in years 3 or 4. Academics will be needed to assist in selecting applications. Normally around 30 students apply for the two places.

**XX Section B for Noting and Approval**

**XX GS/24-25/027 Revisions to Careers and Employability modules (CRP2600CE and CRP2601CW) for PhD students effective from 2024/25 and Memorandum from Ms Orla Bannon, Head of Enterprise Engagement and Development (Trinity Careers and Development) and Ms Marielle Kelly, Module Lead**

The committee endorsed proposed enhancements to two modules: Careers and Employability (5 ECTS) and Employability and Work-based Learning (10 ECTS) originally rolled out from January 2021. All content, resources, assignments and assessments for both modules remain unchanged, but a number of in-person sessions and assignments will be consolidated to online delivery to improve attendance and module completion rates. The costs associated with the above changes will be met by the Trinity Careers Service. The Dean noted that although the proposed changes are only at the module level but as the module sits outside the School structure, the submission found its place on the agenda to enhance its visibility and transparency.

**Decision GS/24-25/027:** The committee recommended for Council approval the proposed online enhancements to two modules: Careers and Employability (CRP2600CE) and Employability and Work-based Learning (CRP2601CW) effective from 2024/25.

**XX GS/24-25/028 Update on GSC Sub-Committee on Micro-credentials – Memorandum from Ms Orla Bannon, Head of Enterprise Engagement and Development (Trinity Careers and Development)**

Members noted the approved extension of the Trinity HCI Pillar 3 Micro-Credentials Pilot Programme to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025 and endorsed the resulting revised Terms of Reference and membership of GSC Sub-committee on Micro-credentials. As agreed by HCI Steering Committee at its meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024, no new micro-credentials will be considered in 2024/25 apart from two MC proposals from pilot Schools not approved at the April 2024 Sub-Committee meeting; they may be resubmitted in light of feedback received.

**Decision GS/24-25/028:** The committee recommended for Council approval the proposed revised Terms of Reference and membership of GSC Sub-committee on Micro-credentials for the Trinity HCI Pillar 3 Micro-Credentials Pilot Programme extended to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

**XX Section C for Noting**

**GS/24-25/029 Revisions to Core Biomedical Research Skills module (BIP77100) for PhD students and Memorandum from Prof. Rachel McLoughlin, (School of Biochemistry and Immunology DTLP) and Dr Barry Moran, Module Lead**

The Committee noted minor updates to the layout of the Core Biomedical Research Skills module (BIP77100) effective for the 2024/25 academic year. The changes do not affect the overall module learning outcomes, but as it is a techniques module, the techniques covered have been adjusted. The Dean noted that the proposed changes need not have come to the GSC as they can be approved at the School level but the submission has been left in to illustrate its difference to the Careers modules which cannot be approved at the School level. The Appendix I to the Programme-Curriculum Design Approval Policy determines which changes can be approved locally and which need to come to GSC for approval by Council.

**GS/24-25/030 Viva supports for doctoral students with Learning Differences and/or Disabilities (LDD): IUA Guidance**

Members noted a guidance paper drafted by a working group within the IUA Deans of Graduate Studies for member institutions on the supports for the viva voce examination for doctoral candidates who require additional accommodations. It is a principles-based document and all member institutions have signed up to it. Implementation in practice is an internal matter of each university. The Dean asked for feedback on the document and its implementation in Trinity in order that an overarching process flow can be developed. The IUA has undertaken to format the document into a booklet to be hosted on their website. Students do not have to be registered with Disability Service.

**GS/24-25/031 Inclusion of School of Social Work and Social Policy in Pilot Non-resident PhD Programme in advance of PhD application cycle for September 2025 entry - Memorandum from Prof. Eavan Brady, School DTLP**

Members noted the inclusion of the School of Social Work and Social Policy in the Pilot Non-resident PhD Programme in advance of the new PhD application cycle for September 2025 entry.

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

Prof. Martine Smith

Date: 17 October 2024