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 27 February 2025

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 Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry
Professor Gavin Doherty, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Noel Ó Murchadha, School of Education
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

Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary (TT&L)
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience
Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services
Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor's Office
Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L)
Ms Ewa Sadowska, Administrative Officer (Academic Affairs, TT&L)

Postgraduate Representatives:
TCDSU/AMLCT PGR Representative: Ms Almudena Moreno Borrallo

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
Guest: Prof. Joseph Roche, Associate Dean of Research on behalf of Dean of Research

In attendance for Postgraduate Renewal Items:

Apologies:
Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research
Professor Wladislaw Rivkin, Trinity Business School
Professor Evangelia Rigaki, School of Creative Arts
Professor Padhraig Fleming, School of Dental Science
Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, School of Engineering
Professor Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics & Microbiology
Professor Ana Perez-Luno, Academic Director, Portal

TCDSU/AMLCT PGT Representative: Ms Orla Richard

Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services
Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal)
Aoife Kelly, Programme Administrator (PG Renewal)

In attendance for individual items:
Prof. Eleanor Denny (Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation) for item GS/24-25/078
Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer, Academic Affairs (TT&L) for items GS/24-25/079, GS/24-25/086 and GS/24-25/087.

XX **Section A**

XX **GS/24-25/076 Minutes of GSC of 23 January 2025**
The minutes were approved as circulated.

XX **GS/24-25/077 Matters Arising**
The Dean noted that all Actions from the January meeting had been completed or attended to and Decisions from the previous meeting on Agenda A and B were approved by Council on the 5th February. Most Matters Arising were closed off and covered in the Dean's memorandum circulated in advance of the meeting.

Re GS/24-25/062: the Dean advised that her 2023/24 Annual Report was well received by Council.
Re GS/24-25/069(v): the School of Medicine DTLP advised that a small working group had been set up and agreed on a process of sourcing feedback from all School DTLPs on the possible introduction of an additional "merit grade" to reflect the students' achievement within the 65% to 69% range.

XX **GS/24-25/078 Trinity East development – Prof. Eleanor Denny (Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation) to update**
The Dean welcomed Prof. Eleanor Denny (Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation) who updated members on the Trinity East Campus and a broader University Master Plan.

The Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation spoke to the vision of how Trinity East is to be refurbished and refitted to convert the former IDA Enterprise Centre into a thriving second city-centre campus for all disciplines supporting transformational growth in research and innovation over the next 30 years. The Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation noted that the development is to take place in four discrete phases: Green, Yellow, Red and Blue. The current (Green) phase to last until 2028 focuses on delivery of the Portal Innovation Hub (to open in June), a new digital (Laidlaw) library philanthropically financed by the Laidlaw foundation for completion in 2027/28, provision of increased space for research activity while also maintaining flexibility for future uses and interdisciplinary projects.

Action GS/24-25/078(i): Members to forward suggestions to the Librarian on infrastructure facilities to be built into the planning design of the new Laidlaw Library to adequately provide for needs of the PG community.

A number of criteria, such as strategic alignment, minimising disruption to existing research, lower investment required and opportunities to make realistic transformative improvements, determined that the next phase to be developed from mid-2028 should be Yellow to convert existing units into research space. Detailed plans for the Yellow phase will be finalised in the context of the Trinity Master Plan to be based on auditing the current usage of space in Trinity and determining what rebuilding activities need to be undertaken over the next five to ten years.

Action GS/24-25/078(ii): Members to engage with architects currently surveying Schools for feedback on the needs of the PG community to be incorporated into the Master Plan.

In a discussion which ensued the following issues were raised:
1) The role of the new Portal space was outlined primarily as a networking and incubator hub for staff and students to facilitate interacting with business representatives to exchange innovation information, make collaborative connections and develop professional and research contacts. It may be useful to members to invite Mr Neil Gordon, Director of Portal, to a future GSC meeting for an update. A walk down around the Portal site might also be of interest to committee members.

Action GS/24-25/078(iii): The Dean to invite Mr Neil Gordon, Director of Portal, to a future GSC meeting to provide an update, and to arrange a visit for members to the Portal site.

2) Current occupants of the area to be developed under the Yellow phase will be affected but an effort will be made to limit the disruption and map out mitigating measures for necessary future relocations after 2028. Staff from affected Schools will be consulted on an ongoing basis.
3) Engagement with the local community continues to play a key part in development activities around Trinity East.
4) The issue of more desk space for PGR students will be addressed in the Yellow phase and included in the Master Plan. Additional student accommodation is intended in the first instance for expansion in Trinity Hall in Dartry Road where planning permission has been secured for 350 beds but there is no funding available to commence the build.
5) Trinity works closely with Dublin City Council to upgrade Pearse Street into an environmentally friendly "green" thoroughfare linking the main Campus with Trinity East.

The Dean thanked the Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation for her informative presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX   GS/24-25/079 Policy (new): Late Submission of Assessments (Extensions) Policy - Dr Elizabeth Studies to Donnellan, Education Policy Developer, Academic Affairs (TT&L) to present
The Dean welcomed Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer to speak to the new Policy on Late Submission of Assessments (Extensions) developed in response to feedback from academics that a standard approach to extensions and an outline of agreed procedures would provide consistency across the University. The policy has been developed in consultation with the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Senior Tutor, the Postgraduate Advisory Service. The draft was twice considered by the Undergraduate Studies Committee in January and in February and went out to Schools for feedback. The Director of the College Disability Service was also consulted around section 6.3, which references Learning

Educational Needs Summary (LENS) reports. Students with an appropriate LENS report that recommends flexible deadlines on assessments will not be required to submit additional evidence as they will automatically have reasonable accommodations incorporated into their submission deadlines. The policy also covers students who for other *ad mis* reasons require an extension. The Education Policy Developer talked members through the main sections of the proposed policy.

In a discussion which ensued the following issues were raised:
1) The meeting was an opportunity for discussion to source input from a PGT perspective to reflect the PG student cohort's needs in the proposed policy and hence no decision was required to be taken.
2) It has been acknowledged that finding a balance between the need for flexibility and ensuring the integrity of the assessment plus fairness across the student body and logistics of timings of court of examiners will present a challenge.
3) Students with documented chronic health conditions are not required to provide evidence for every instance of extension sought.
4) When disability was not disclosed at the start of the year but arose during the year, the student can apply at that stage for reasonable accommodation.
5) Whether additional time can be given to a student to commence work on assignment earlier than the class instead of having an extension added beyond the class submission date, on the grounds that this approach would avoid constricting the already tight marking turn around. Members favoured the suggestion that this adaptation be decided at School level, in line with the spirit of the policy requiring only that the eligible student is facilitated with additional time where possible (implying that it might not always be possible to facilitate such requests).
6) The Policy prescribing a default extension of one week for the whole group on a team project when one LENS-student is seeking it was considered too rigid and over impactful for the whole group. It was agreed that group projects might be the scenario when granting extensions might not be feasible and might have to be managed on a case-by-case basis at School level.
7) Extension deadlines should not fall on a Friday as the weekend would give the student additional time to complete the assignment.

The Dean concluded that as further changes would be needed to the policy, a revised version will be brought to the next meeting. She thanked the Education Policy Developer for her informative presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX **GS/24-25/080 Impact report on PG Advisory Service – Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer (Senior Tutor's Office) to present**
The Dean invited the Postgraduate Student Support Officer to speak to the Postgraduate Advisory Service's (PAS) service-levels and impact data for the academic year 2023/24 which marked fifteen years since PAS, currently staffed by the staff of two, was established in response to a Senior Tutor's Office quality review recommendation to extend tutorial support to PGR and PGT students. The PG community has significantly evolved in recent years, together with types of PAS supports. Since 2021/22 PAS has operated a "layered support" model prioritising preventative interventions such as digital support, trainings, email and group support. Monitoring and, where possible and within resources, improving levels of service and measuring the impact of PAS's interventions on PG students forms part of the PAS's annual workplan.

The PG Student Support Officer spoke to the circulated slides illustrating:
i)   The brief of the PAS with its solution- rather than person-centred approach and a breakdown of presenting issues in 2022/23 and 2023/24 illustrating a significant

reduction of Covid- and Academic Integrity-related cases but an increase in cases related to supervision and appeals,

ii) an increase in the number of PAS contacts with students from 2,531 in 2016/17 (the year impact reporting began) to 15,505 in 2023/24,

iii) a growth in the amount of Student Assistance Funding from approx. €44,000 in 2016/17 to over €228,000 in 2023/24, and

iv) PAS's positive impact reported on postgraduate retention, academic performance and overall, PG student Trinity experience.

In conclusion of his presentation, the Postgraduate Student Support Officer acknowledged constructive collaboration with a number of stakeholders in College such as the Senior Tutor, Dean of Students, Students Union, Library, Student Services, DTLPs and Schools, Dean of Graduate Studies and PG Renewal working closely together with the Postgraduate Advisory Service.

In a discussion which ensued the following comments were made:

1) School DTLPs thanked the Postgraduate Student Support Officer for his assistance in dealing with PG student issues over the years.

2) The PGR Representative extended her thanks on behalf of the student body for the service "doing a really good job".

3) The Postgraduate Student Support Officer confirmed that eligibility for the financial assistance depends on the student income threshold of €30k for a single person including the PGR stipend and additional teaching as appropriate.

4) A decline in appeal cases is anticipated on the basis on new regulatory changes permitting for example a repeat of failed dissertation, and cutting off the number of times the student can present the same documents in the same case; these new regulations will apply from the new academic year following Council approval.

The Dean stated that PAS student data should come for discussion annually and asked that it be segregated in the next report separately pertaining to PGR and PGT students to illustrate dominant profiles in each group. She thanked the Postgraduate Student Support Officer for his informative presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX   GS/24-25/081 Application Deadlines – Memorandum from Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L) to introduce
The Dean invited Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) to speak to the circulated memorandum. The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) noted that in recent years, some Schools sought permission to bring forward the deadline by which applicants must have satisfied admission requirements, particularly English language proficiency qualifications to ensure that other deadlines, especially pertaining to visa processing, have a reasonable chance of being met, thus enabling students to register and assume allocated course places. After meetings between the Admissions and the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies with Schools a new set of deadlines was proposed. Such deadlines would have to operate across College as it is not feasible to have bespoke deadlines for each PGT programme.

Proposed revised deadlines stipulate that

i) Conditional offers accepted before June 16th must meet all conditions by July 7th

ii) Conditional offers accepted on or after June 16th must meet all conditions by August 21st

iii) Exceptions may be made if transcripts are not yet available

iv) When issuing recommendations after June 16th, Schools must consider that visa processing for Non-EU applicants takes up to 8-12 weeks (sometimes even 16 weeks),

and the applicant must hold an unconditional offer; it will therefore not be recommended to issue conditional offers after June 16th to applicants requiring a visa to enter Ireland.

In a short discussion which ensued the following comments were made:
1) Some DTLPs expressed concern about changing deadlines for current applicants, and that the proposed deadlines do not allow for the full 8-12 week turnaround time for visa applications.
2) Potential international students will be lost due to the new time deadlines early on in the applications process but that should be counter-balanced by fewer un-registered students without visas resulting in fewer unfilled course places at the start of the new academic year.
3) The question arose whether there is a box on the application form asking if the applicant needs a visa to alert the staff assessing the application.

Action GS/24-25/081(i): Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) to check whether there is a box on the application form asking if the applicant needs a visa to alert the staff assessing the application.

4) Strong guidelines rather than deadlines should be put in place to allow for individual cases where some flexibility is required. However, such flexibility is already accommodated under the provision that "exceptions can be made".
5) The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) clarified that the proposed deadlines are aimed at PGT applicants rather than PGR applicants.

Action GS/24-25/081(ii): Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) to correct the memorandum to clarify that the proposed deadlines pertain only to PGT applicants.

6) The proposed deadlines might be too tight for applicants in need to appeal the initial rejection which might take up to 16 weeks.
7) Provision for a deferral to the next year for visa purposes should be inserted.
8) The admissions system will not prevent the issuing of a conditional offer after June 16th but assessing staff should acknowledge that it is not recommended due to visa requirements.
9) It is not feasible due to limited staff resources on the PGT Admissions team dealing with a huge volume of applications to run a two-tier process with separate deadlines differentiating between applicants requiring and not requiring a visa.
10) Applicants could potentially see that acceptance by June 16th allows only until July 7th for meeting all conditions for admissions while acceptance a day later on or after June 16th allows a longer time until August 21st.
11) The feedback from the discussion will be passed to the PGT Admissions to decide what information should be available to applicants.
12) Schools have already expressed concern how received applications should be handled if the proposed deadlines were to be implemented for the current admissions session. The Dean advised Schools to consider their respective situations and return feedback to the Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education).

Action GS/24-25/081(iii): DTLPs to source feedback from course directors in relation to the proposed new admissions deadline and return it within 2 weeks i.e., by March 13th to the Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education).

Action GS/24-25/081(iv): The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) to send on February 28th an email reminder to DTLPs to source feedback from course directors in relation to the proposed new admissions deadline and return it to him within 2 weeks i.e., by March 13th.

13) Applicants should be advised on School websites on the time pressures to be faced in the admissions process.

The Dean thanked the Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) for his presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX **GS/24-25/082 Horizon 2: PG Renewal monthly update (February) – Ms Leona Coady, Programme Director (PG Renewal) to present**
The PG Renewal Programme Director took her slide as read and spoke to selected issues such as applications for TRDAs, forthcoming "road show" meetings with Schools to highlight activities of the PG renewal programme during the current year, a forthcoming invitation to staff engaged to date with the process to evaluate two-phase pilot for PGT course proposals, an invitation to a forthcoming Triple I focus group to design a Triple I framework, proposed integration of PGR assessment and progression and thesis functionality into SITS, and a further enhancement of Power BI.

In a short discussion which ensued the following clarifications were obtained:
1) The ideal audience for the forthcoming road shows in Schools are Postgraduate Committees or School Committees.
2) The outcome for PI-based TRDA applications will be decided on by the end of April.
3) The Dean reported that at the Research Committee the timing of notification of TRDA outcomes was raised as being out of alignment to normal recruitment timelines in some disciplines. Given the diverse practices across disciplines, it is not clear that there will be a solution found that addresses all Schools' concerns.
4) July 1st is the deadline for making a School-based award to a research applicant.

In conclusion, members were invited to an event, to be opened by the Provost, showcasing achievements of the PG Renewal Programme due to take place on Tuesday, the 15th April.

The Dean thanked the PGR Programme Director for her presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX **GS/24-25/083 Horizon 2: Reorganisation of the Office of the Dean of Graduate – Memorandum and Discussion Paper from Dean of Graduate Studies and PG Renewal Programme Director**
The Dean thanked volunteers who over the past month have met four times to draft a proposal on a re-structured Graduate Studies Office. The Dean spoke to the proposal, approved by the PG Renewal Steering Committee, outlining the vision for PG Education in Trinity and setting out an enabling administrative structure for graduate studies governance. The Dean listed shortfalls pertaining to the current PGR structures. Comparisons with universities in Ireland and the UK has shown a trend towards differentiating administrative structures to support PGT and PGR areas. As Trinity is a research-intensive university, research is prioritised at the PG level although commonalities with the PGT area are recognised in terms of research-informed Masters dissertations.

Two pillars of activity, a "Graduate Education Hub" and a "Doctoral Academy", both within the remit of the Dean of Graduate Studies, should be established with a new role of an Associate Dean of Graduate Education to lead on the policy and strategy across PGT activities to maximise lifelong

learning opportunities and address forthcoming challenges. The proposed Doctoral Academy should allow Trinity to maintain its competitive edge in research in Ireland and internationally.

The Doctoral Academy is to be conceived as a single service point or a "one-stop-shop" for staff and students in relation to PGR activities. Its role will enhance daily operational activities, drive strategy, oversee implementation of strategic initiatives, enhance the student and staff experience, build excellence in research supervision, and coordinate financial and other reporting responsibilities while protecting the autonomy of Schools.

The Dean spoke to a diagram illustrating a proposed operational and governance structure of the Doctoral Academy. A new Planning Group will be set up as a forum to formulate an annual workplan to be signed off by the new Management Committee chaired by the Vice Provost to ensure alignment of the workplan with the broader strategy of the university; the plan will require the approval of the GSC but will not constitute the entire workplan of the GSC. A major challenge comes from the lack of sufficient finances, and therefore the proposed structure will need to be built incrementally. The Dean noted that significant PGR-related activities, such as dealing with TRDA applications and disbursing stipend payments, have been subsumed within the PG Renewal project but a new robust administrative structure, like the proposed Doctoral Academy, will be needed to take ownership of those activities and manage them in the future upon the PG Renewal project finalisation.

In a discussion which ensued the following comments were made:
1) Some DTLPs were concerned whether the proposed new structure might necessitate more administrative work at the School level. The Dean clarified that the intent was to ensure effective administrative support, rather than creating additional workload but noted that the proposed structure should be tried out for three years in the first instance to evaluate whether the anticipated efficiencies have materialised.
2) The proposed structure looks more like an expansion than a reorganisation in line with ambition but not necessarily with the available resources. In some Schools the DTLP fulfils the role in addition to still performing all other duties without release any tasks. The concern has been expressed that the proposed Doctoral Academy is likely to generate additional administrative and coordinating workload for DTLPs and this should be quantified and mapped out into additional resources to be allocated to Schools.

   The Dean acknowledged that the DTLP role has significantly expanded within the timeframe of the PG Renewal project and that should be recognised at the School level.

   The PG Renewal Director noted that co-designing with Schools, staff and students, has been a key approach for reviewing and addressing inefficient processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose. That same approach for continued collaboration with Schools is driving the proposed Doctoral Academy structure to co-deliver the best services to the PGR community.

3) In response to a question by the Dean directed towards the DTLPs asking them to reflect on what the proposed Doctoral Academy could do for their respective Schools, the School of LLCS DTLP stated that designing a designated structure as a "single source of truth" was very compelling but the "shape" of it was a separate issue distinct from its function. An AI chat properly trained on Trinity data could most likely carry out elements of such a function. Efficiencies are undoubtedly to be made in a number of areas across College leading to improved services for staff and students, but the question arises how that directly impacts the School activities and that she cannot see the bigger picture through the proposed new structure. The Dean noted that the new Planning Group could actually consider issues of

concern at the School level to identify solutions in a cooperative way by discussing it with the "right people around the table".

4) The new structure will play a significant role in the future proofing in relation to future unanticipated issues putting pressure on the PGR space. Having a designated structure in College will take the pressure away from Schools.

5) A good structure of decision making and for the flow of information is necessary although it might not change the daily life of PGR students.

6) A member asked whether it is intended to bring into the proposed structure the point-to-point Offices currently interacting with Graduate Studies. The Dean responded that it is intended to replace that structure by setting up the Planning Group with a designated membership.

The Dean thanked members for their contribution to the discussion and advised that their feedback will inform further work on the draft to be brought back for additional consideration to the Steering Group.

XX   GS/24-25/084 Any Other Business

i) **Blackboard Ultra –** Profs Noel Ó Murchadha and Eavan Brady, early adopters of the new platform, shared their positive experiences with a view to encouraging DTLPs to undertake the training. Both members underlined that Blackboard Ultra is more user friendly and intuitive than Blackboard Original. The Dean noted that PhD students continuing to teach or new to teaching the following year should also avail of the training.

Action GS/24-25/084(i): DTLPs to engage early with Blackboard Ultra training and to spread the information on its usefulness amongst their colleague academics and PhD students engaged in teaching in Schools.

In response to a query that Panopto was not covered in the basic essential training, the Information Technology Services representative explained that Panopto is part of advanced specific training session to be made available the following week. IT Services are available to do a School-by-School training to cover specific staff needs. Staff who have not completed the basic training will be contacted by the IT Services. All staff should engage with the training and confirm its completion on the system.

ii) **College Strategic plan – Dean of Graduate Studies to update**
The Dean underlined that upgrade of digital infrastructure forms a significant part of the College strategic plan to be published in July.

iii) **IUA Guidelines on viva voce examinations and supports for doctoral students**
The Dean circulated the IUA Guidelines and will upload them to the shared drive. She will link with the Disability Service in relation to their implementation in Trinity. DTLPs were invited to share the document with their colleagues.

Action GS/24-25/084(iii): DTLPs invited to share the IUA Guidelines with their School colleagues.

iv) **Summer School at the University of Montpellier** June 23rd -27th 2025 for three PhD students from Trinity (ideally one per faculty) run through the CHARM-EU initiative. The Dean uploaded a slide into the GSC folder in SharePoint with information on how to apply.

Action GS/24-25/084(iv): DTLPs to invite their PhD students to apply for the June Summer School at the University of Montpellier.

v) **PGR students' access to VPN**
The TCDSU/AMLCT PGR Representative met with the Head of IT who clarified that PGR students have access to VPN on College-provided computers, and that the information on the IT website will be updated accordingly. By the end of 2025, access to Trinity services for all staff and students will be set up via cloud pc.

Action GS/24-25/084(v): DTLPs to advise their PhD students of current access to VPN via College-provided computers.

XX **Section B for Noting and Approval**

XX **GS/24-25/085 Removal of "Policy on Covid-19 Vaccination for Students in Clinical Placements or Placements in Allied Settings" – Memorandum from Prof. Brian O'Connell, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences**
The committee noted that the Policy on Covid-19 Vaccination for Students in Clinical Placements or Placements in Allied Settings has been in effect since its approval by Board on 27th July 2021. As part of the normal review cycle of the policy, the Health Sciences Faculty Executive sought input from the Director of College Health who advised that Covid-19 is covered by infectious diseases policies generally rather than by a separate policy. Accordingly, the current *Policy on Covid-19 Vaccination for Students in Clinical Placements or Placements in Allied Settings* is to be stood-down.

Decision GS/24-25/085: The committee recommended for Council approval the discontinuation of the Policy on Covid-19 Vaccination for Students in Clinical Placements or Placements in Allied Settings.

XX **GS/24-25/086 Policy Review: Assessment and Academic Progression - Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs, TT&L)**
The committee noted a final revision to the policy reflecting feedback from earlier meetings by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Graduate Studies Committee, from Schools and from the Director of the College Disability Service on the wording of sections 6.6 and 6.7 referencing Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) reports.

Decision GS/24-25/086: The committee recommended for Council approval the proposed final version of the Assessment and Academic Progression Policy.

XX **GS/24-25/087 Policy Review: Return of Coursework - Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs, TT&L)**
The committee noted a final revision to the policy reflecting feedback from earlier meetings by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Graduate Studies Committee and from Schools.

Decision GS/24-25/087: The committee recommended for Council approval the proposed final version of the Return of Coursework Policy.

XX **GS/24-25/088 Direct entry Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing – request from School of Nursing and Midwifery**
The committee noted a request from the School of Nursing and Midwifery to introduce a direct entry Postgraduate Diploma course in Specialist Nursing with its PG Dip attainment award on completion of

60 ECTS taught modules over 1 year. Currently, the Specialist Nursing programme consists of two part-time Masters structures of 90 ECTS offered over 2 years (the traditional model) and over 3 years (the framework one). Both current formats offer a PG Dip exit award but have no direct entry pathway into the PG Dip which creates a significant challenge for the School and for applicants, as employers typically will only fund a PG Dip. So far students have been registering on the two-year MSc and exiting after completion of year one with 60 credits.

The proposed direct entry course is required for nursing applicants with designated funding for a part-time Postgraduate Diploma. Following consultations with the Academic Registry, the School therefore asks that from 2025/26 the taught 60 ECTS credits be delivered exceptionally part-time (rather than full-time) over one year to support the release of funding streams for applicants; the bespoke set up will be reviewed in five years. New course codes will be set up to enable applicants intending to complete only the PG Dip to apply directly to that pathway. No course proposal is required, as the students will continue to all intents and purposes on the same programme as heretofore. The only change is a background course code change. The committee recommended the proposal for Council approval for the AR to implement it.

> **Decision GS/24-25/088:** The committee recommended for Council approval the introduction of a direct entry Postgraduate Diploma course in Specialist Nursing with its PgDip attainment award on completion of taught 60 ECTS credit volume over 1 year exceptionally part-time (rather than full-time) from 2025/26 admissions cycle to support the release of funding streams for nursing applicants.

Section C for Noting

GS/24-25/089 Proposed changes to Horizon 2 Work Plan for WP3 deliverables from Programme Director (PG Renewal)

Members noted changes Horizon 2 Work Plan for WP#3 (Systems and Processes) deliverables in terms of which areas will continue as planned, which new deliverables will be added to the scope, and which will be taken out of it, and which areas will be de-prioritised. GSC had previously approved the workplan for WP#3, but since then, as the work package has taken on extensive additional work on stipend payment, it has become necessary to adjust their planned work with three elements to be de-scoped. Each of these elements requires some groundwork in policy development and/or is captured in other work that is already in train.

GS/24-25/090 Increase in English language requirement to Band C for Master in Social Work from 2026/27 - request from School of Social Work and Social Policy

Members noted that the English requirement for admissions to the Master in Social Work (MSW) course will move to the Higher Entry Band C from 2026/27 as approved at the School level.

GS/24-25/091 Draft Minutes of Royal Irish Academy of Music Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM ACDC) of 4 February 2025

The draft minutes of RIAM ACDC of the 4th February 2025 were circulated to members for noting.

GS/24-25/092 Draft Minutes of Marino Institute of Education Associated College Degrees Committee (MIE) ACDC of 11th February 2025

The draft minutes of MIE ACDC of the 11th February 2025 were circulated to members for noting.

The Dean thanked all the committee members. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12.05pm.

Prof. Martine Smith   Date: 27 February 2025