

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee on Thursday 3rd April, 2003
in Room 2026, Arts & Social Sciences Building.

Present (Chair)	Dean of Graduate Studies
Arts (Humanities)	Dr. M.-A. Valiulis
Arts (Letters)	Prof. D. Singleton
	Dr. C. Morris
Business, Economic & Social Studies	Dr. E. Mahon
Engineering & Systems Science	Dr. T. Orr
Health Sciences	Ms. A. Higgins
	Dr. F. Falkiner
GSU	Mr. C. Travis
	Mr. T. O' Donnell

In attendance: Ms. E. McGlade (Library), Ms. G. Hogan (ISS); Ms. L. Donnellan (GSO); Dr. V. Barron (School of Physics); Dr. A. Mullally (School of Business); Prof. M. Laver (Dept. of Political Science); Dr. I. Filby (ISA).

Apologies: Dr. T. Kavanagh; Dr. P. Kruger; Dr. K. Benoit; Mr. D. Scammell; Dr. A. Moore; Dr. A. Chantler; Prof. M. Gibney.

168.0 Minutes of the meeting of the 6th March, 2003

There were no changes to the minutes

168.1 Matters arising

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the Finance Office had approved a waiver of the fee for validated postgraduate diplomas from the Church of Ireland College of Education (Item 160.3, minutes of the meeting of the 18th April 2002) for two years, after which time the issue of fees for these courses would be reviewed.

Re item 166.4 of the minutes of the meeting of the 6th February 2003, procedures for the award of higher degrees by research, the Dean said that he would postpone reporting on his proposals until the meeting of the 8th May, 2003.

Regarding item 167.6, the implications of the current financial cuts on self-funded courses, the Dean reported that he had not discussed the item in detail with Dr Mahon as yet.

The Dean reported that in a change to the agenda, item 8 'Approval of changes in Calendar regulations for the D. Clin. Psy.' would be postponed to a later meeting and that in a change to the proposed time slots, items 5 and 6 would be presented before item 4.

168.2 Review of the M.Sc. in Polymer Science & Technology

The review of this course was held on the 8th January 2003.

The Dean welcomed Dr Valerie Barron, course co-ordinator for the M.Sc. in Polymer Science and Technology and invited her to respond to the report of the review. Dr

Barron said that she agreed with the report in general and highlighted the following issues that were raised by the reviewer.

- Although the course had been originally been set-up in response to an identified need by industry to up-skill workers in the polymer technology area, there had been no follow through by industry after the course was set-up. Many students have not returned to industry but have continued as research postgraduates in the Physics Department or in other colleges.
- Low student numbers on the course are a continuing problem. In this regard, industry has not supported the course through the provision of students, since there is little evidence of employees being encouraged to participate.
- The course appears to have met the needs and requirements of the students, and the combination of subjects is well received and has broadened career choices. The course also fits well into the general interests of the Department.

Dr Valiulis queried whether the Plastics Industries Federation had been contacted regarding the low student numbers. Dr Barron said that as those involved in helping to set-up the course were no longer working there, it was often difficult to get a consistent response. In addition, the change in economic climate had affected industry's willingness to release workers to attend courses. She said that most students on the course were recruited by word of mouth. Dr Mahon queried whether it would be more productive to approach companies directly to recruit students. Dr Barron said that initially that is what had been done, using a marketing person. Dr Mahon then queried the number of female staff on the course. Dr Barron said that a high proportion of the students were female and Dr Mahon suggested that as this was novel in industry, it could be a useful selling point to secure EU funding. As many companies receive EU funding to up-skill workers in-house, she felt that the course should be able to tap into some of this funding.

Dr Orr commented that the course seemed to be less focused on up-skilling for industry and more focused on recruitment for research. Dr Barron said it did appear that way, as many students on the course continued as postgraduate research students. However, she said that others used the course as a means of advancing their careers in industry. Dr Falkiner asked whether the course was advertised on the Departmental website and if so, what response it got. Dr Barron said that the course was advertised and received a good response. Dr Falkiner queried the assertion that access to laboratory facilities was difficult for those not associated with the college. Dr Barron reported that students were required to travel to Queens University in Belfast to study the processing element of the course, since the Physics Department did not have the space or resources to purchase the large machines required. Dr Mahon asked whether there were any links between the course and a similar one run through the IT in Sligo. Dr Barron said that there were no formal links, although some discussions had taken place.

The Dean thanked Dr Barron and the Committee approved the report on the review.

168.3 Proposal for an M.Sc. in Management Information Systems (part-time)

The Dean introduced Dr Alan Mullally, who presented the proposal to the Committee. Dr Mullally reported that the HEA had offered funding of €150 million over 5 years to develop courses which would help to up-skill those already working in the IT sector. A need for this type of course has been identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, who feel that staff in the IT sector often rise to management level without any formal management training. The Computer Science Department is already running two

postgraduate courses, which are very successful, and it is felt that this programme would complement these existing programmes. In addition, there is a strong commitment in College to continuing education. It is hoped that this course would become a model for future continuing education programmes by using blended learning. The course will run over 2 years on a part-time basis, and take a maximum of 30 students per year with a minimum requirement of 20. The course must start in October 2003 in order to secure funding.

The Committee thanked Dr Mullally and then discussed the proposal. They suggested that an amended version of the proposal should be resubmitted to the Committee for approval, which would further elaborate on

1. assessment methods and the criteria for the awarding of a Postgraduate Diploma and
2. the management elements of the course.

168.4 Revised proposal re the PhD. in Political Science - awarding of a lower degree

The Dean introduced Prof. Michael Laver who presented a revised Calendar entry to the Committee regarding the awarding of a lower degree for the PhD in Political Science programme. The Dean emphasised that the purpose of the proposal was to regularise the situation regarding existing students and that the aim was to have a cut-off point two years into the programme at which student's suitability to progress to a PhD would be assessed. Prof. Laver said that the main changes in the regulations related to the results of the *viva voce* after year two and the option to downgrade the PhD to an M.Phil. The Dean of Graduate Studies asked whether the regulations for downgrading were separate to the pass/fail criteria for the coursework and whether the revised regulations would cover those students who had failed the coursework element of the programme. Prof. Laver said that the answer to both questions was yes. Dr Mahon queried how many PhD's in Political Science had been awarded to date and Prof. Laver said that there had been 8 in total. Mr Travis asked whether there were any transitional research courses available to students in the taught component of the course. Prof. Laver confirmed that in 2nd year the students did not have coursework during the 2nd semester, during which time they received their reading lists and were assigned a supervisor.

Dr Valiulis expressed concern that the students who were admitted to the PhD programme were then downgraded to an M.Phil. and that this would reflect badly on other M.Phil. students in the college. Prof. Laver felt that it was important psychologically that all students were taken onto the programme as PhD students without distinction. The Dean thanked Prof. Laver and the Committee then discussed the proposal further. The Committee felt that while they agreed with the proposed mechanisms for evaluating students for places on the doctoral register, they could not support a procedure where some students would be initially registered for a Ph.D. and then downgraded to an M.Phil. In the context of establishing policy for further developments of doctoral programmes, and the increasing inclusion of taught elements, the Committee underlined its commitment to the existing integrated Masters/PhD model. The Committee proposed that students on this programme should be admitted initially on to the Masters register and then be transferred to the doctoral register on successful completion of the evaluation outlined by Prof Laver. The Dean of Graduate Studies agreed to convey this to Prof Laver and to request that the department take this view into account in proposing regulations.

168.5 Proposal for an M.Sc./Diploma in Pharmaceutical Medicine

The course was introduced by Dr Fred Falkiner, who gave a brief outline of the course proposal to the Committee in the absence of the course co-ordinator. The Committee were generally supportive of the proposal but had a number of queries regarding the financing of the distance-learning element of the course which Dr Falkiner was unable to answer. The Dean of Graduate Studies proposed that he ask the course co-ordinator to attend the next meeting of Graduate Studies Committee to answer these queries and that the Committee would approve the proposal with this proviso. He also said that he would request a Calendar entry for the new course, which should specify that students would not be awarded both the M.Sc. and the Diploma. The Committee also queried whether the proposal had been approved by the Library Committee and Eileen McGlade said that she would investigate this.

168.6 Recruitment of non-EU students for postgraduate courses -ISA

The Director of International Student Affairs, Dr Ivan Filby, requested through the Committee, that Graduate Studies assist ISA in sending out a questionnaire to Heads of Departments and Course co-ordinators. The aim of the questionnaire was to assess the level of interest across College in the use of recruitment consultants to boost numbers of non-EU students applying for postgraduate courses. Dr Filby reported that the scheme was already in use at undergraduate level but that he would need to assess the level of interest at postgraduate level and whether course co-ordinators would be willing to pay a commission for this service. The Committee had the following questions for Dr Filby:

1. Does there need to be a minimum number of course co-ordinators interested in the scheme in order to make it viable
2. How successful are the agents?
3. How do ISA currently recruit non-EU students
4. With most interest coming via the world wide web, how useful are these agents?
5. What are the areas of most interest for non-EU students?
6. How do large colleges such as Oxford and Cambridge recruit?
7. Do we currently advertise overseas?

The Dean thanked Dr Filby and the Committee then discussed the proposal further. The Committee gave its approval to allow individual course co-ordinators to use recruitment agents and the Dean of Graduate Studies agreed that Graduate Studies would distribute the questionnaire. Dr Mahon raised the issue of advertisement of courses and the Dean of Graduate Studies said that he would speak to the Faculty Deans about the issue. He requested that Dr Mahon write to him on this issue.

168.7 Any other business

There being no further business, the meeting closed
The next meeting is scheduled to take place on the 8th May, 2003.

Signed _____

Date _____