

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27th November, 2003
Room 2026, Arts Building.

Present: Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair), Dean of Research, Dr Maryann Valiulis, Dr Alan Kramer, Prof. David Singleton, Dr John Donegan, Dr Trevor Hodkinson, Dr Alan Moore, Dr Trevor Orr, Mr Michael Dowling, Ms Susannah Scott, Ms Mairead De Roiste;

In attendance: Mr Trevor Peare (Library), Ms Gail Hogan (ISS), Ms Ewa Sadowska (GSO), Ms Nicky Saunders (GSO);

Apologies: Dr Christine Morris, Dr Evelyn Mahon, Dr Joseph McDonagh, Ms Margaret Carroll, Dr Frederick Falkiner,

174.0 Minutes of the meeting of 16 October, 2003 and 13 November, 2003

The amended minutes of 16 October 2003 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Dean. The minutes of 13 November 2003 were approved by the Committee with an amendment proposed by Dr Donegan to be inserted under item 173.1 to state that "students in the Physics Department are required to complete taught courses before they are allowed to proceed to a PhD on the research register". The Dean stated that he would sign the amended minutes at the next meeting.

174.1 Matters Arising

With regard to the minutes of 16/10/03:

- a) *Re* item on "MSc. in Bioengineering - part-time fee proposal", the Dean stated that Prof. D. Taylor had received a reply from the Treasurer's Office to his request stating that the matter would be presented to the Finance Committee in February.
- b) *Re* item on 1937 Postgraduate Reading Room, the Dean took this item from the main agenda and stated that the Reading Room was officially opened by the Senior Lecturer on the 18 November 2003, and that the ceremony was well attended by students. The Reading Room would be run by a management committee, a sub-committee of the Library Committee, chaired by Mr Trevor Peare and comprising Ms N. Saunders, an administrative officer representing the Graduate Studies Office, representatives from the Graduate Students Union, and representatives from each of the three Faculties having the use of the reading room. With regard to a query about securing wheelchair access to the building, the Dean explained that universal access had always been an integral part of the scheme; though the fact that this was a listed building seemed to have delayed implementation. He reported that the Librarian was currently in discussion with the Buildings Office in order to ensure that such an access could be provided as soon as possible.

With regard to the minutes of 13/11/03 the Dean re-confirmed that the issue of the CHIU project on the PhD practice would be discussed again at an additional meeting of the GSC at the

end of January 2004. He also noted that on 8 December he would be attending in Brussels a CHIU meeting on that issue, and that he would report back to the GSC the recommendations of that meeting.

174.2 Proposal for the awarding of a MSc to the former students of the Irish Institute of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (currently *the MSc in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*)

The Dean invited Mr Ross Skelton to speak to the document circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Skelton explained that a three-year Diploma course in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy had been established in 1993 by a group of psychoanalytic psychotherapists, (all members of the IFPP - the professional body for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in Ireland). At that time, the course was run under the auspices of the Irish Institute of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (IFPP). Between 1996 and 1999, discussions had begun with Trinity College, in the Faculty of Health Sciences, about developing the course as an M.Sc. within the Department of Psychiatry. The discussions involved Prof. Jim Malone, then Dean of Health Sciences, Prof. Michael Fitzgerald and the head of the department, Prof. Marcus Webb. This was accomplished in 1997, in the course of the second intake, which graduated with an M.Sc. degree in 1999. During that period the students from the first intake who had received diplomas, approached the Committee requesting that they might be awarded a retrospective MSc. The former course co-ordinator consulted with Prof. Webb on this matter, and it was decided to wait until a further intake had gone through under the auspices of TCD. Mr Skelton explained that the dissertations then submitted by the Diploma students had all been written following the protocols of taught Masters courses outlined in the postgraduate handbook. The external examiner was the same person who subsequently examined the Trinity M.Sc. awards. The internal examiner was Ross Skelton who was a College staff member. During a short discussion which followed Mr Skelton explained that all applicants admitted into the original Diploma course would have had a primary degree which was a condition of entry, and that the applicants were not given any promise that their diplomas as awarded by the Institute at that time would at any stage in the future be converted into a Trinity M.Sc. After Mr Skelton had withdrawn the Committee discussed the proposal. The Committee agreed to recognise the IFPP Diploma as equivalent to the taught component of the current M.Sc. programme, and permit their holders to join year 3 of the programme. The Dean stated that normal admission requirements would apply to these applicants and if these were not met in a particular case the Course Committee would need to make a special case to the Dean. The Committee accepted all the admissions arrangements as proposed in the document under Appendix IV with regard to the Diploma graduates of 1993-1996 only, namely that

- 1) Diploma graduates will fill out a standard Trinity application form and return it directly to the course coordinator, Ms Nessa Childers, to undergo a process of initial screening for admission. The course coordinator undertakes to deal with all the enquiries and administration leading to the final assessment of all applicants for admission.
- 2) The Course Committee will then process applications, proposing registration on the MSc Psychotherapy programme for those it considers suitably qualified and will inform unsuccessful candidates.
- 3) The application form will consist of the following documentation:
 - (a) A copy of the certificate/diploma awarded by the Institute following the completion of the course.
 - (b) A transcript detailing the teaching and clinical programme undertaken.
 - (c) A copy of the dissertation/project submitted as fulfilment of the diploma course requirements.

- (d) A letter to the Dean from the Course Director recommending that they be considered for admission.
- 4) Once accepted by the Course Committee the applicants' files will be passed to the Graduate Studies Admissions Office for coding, and issuing letters of acceptance with fee demand to the successful applicants.
 - 5) Successful applicants will be admitted into year 3 of the current MSc in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy [620], which is a taught Masters part-time course of 3-year duration.
 - 6) Successful applicants would become registered students for a period of one year. It is expected that this period of time will be used to write an MSc dissertation. A supervisor will be appointed to the student for this period. They will be required to pay one year's tuition fee.
 - 7) Students will be required to submit a new dissertation. They will not be permitted to re-submit a dissertation, which had been submitted for the award of the IFPP Diploma.
 - 8) After students have submitted their dissertations, they will then undertake an oral examination with the external examiner.
 - 9) The results of this examination will be communicated to the students after the appropriate University procedures have been completed.
 - 10) Students who failed their dissertation outright will fail the MSc course and will not be awarded a Trinity diploma.
 - 11) The proposed scheme will be in operation for admission into one academic year 2004-2005, entry October 2004 only.

174.3 Higher doctorates: an update of the review process

The Dean referred to an earlier discussion of this issue at a GSC meeting last year on 8 May 2003. That meeting approved a draft of a revised procedure which was subsequently submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee on 17 June 2003 where it generated a thorough discussion with strong support for the administrative changes but some questions raised about the eligibility criteria and one or two questions about the very justification for the continuation of the degrees themselves. The Dean reported some concern at Academic Affairs that higher doctorates occupy an ambiguous place within a University structure of academic qualifications since they fall between research degrees and honorary degrees. There was also a concern expressed about these degrees being seen as an element in competitive academic promotion procedures. The issue was subsequently addressed at the next Academic Affairs Committee meeting on 5 November 2003 but no further substantial comments were made. Given the seriousness of the issue additional time was allocated for further discussion so that the final recommendations could be put before the following Academic Affairs Committee. During a short discussion the Dean suggested that it would be unlikely that the award of these degrees would be abolished entirely as this might be seen as disadvantaging Trinity graduates against the graduates of major British and Australian Universities, which also award such degrees. A higher doctorate was also sought for and appreciated by academics as additional recognition of their academic excellence. For the benefit of new members the Dean reminded the Committee that that a higher doctorate was awarded on the basis of the published work alone, and that the procedure required an internal vetting of applications first before they could be forwarded for peer review. Historically, demand had been quite low with many applicants being college academic staff. The practice was quite informal, and given the small interest, did not require extensive administrative support. Recently however there had been a steady increase of interest, especially from Trinity graduates working in universities abroad. This increase had revealed the inadequacies in the admission process; in particular that there were no guidelines for applicants and that there was a lack of transparency in the evaluation process. There was general agreement amongst Committee members that if the practice were to continue an

explicit statement would need to be formulated to the effect that a higher doctorate should not be treated as a promotional criterion, and that it must not be seen as a "*habilitation* through the back door". The Dean stated that he intended to report again to the GSC after the Academic Affairs Committee had concluded its debate over it. He invited all members of the committee to pass on to him any further comments on the issue.

174.4 1937 Postgraduate Reading Room

This item was dealt with under *Matters Arising*.

174.5 Amended *Guidelines for Postgraduate Studentships*

The Dean spoke to the document circulated before the meeting. He confirmed that only the section "*Proposed Guidelines*" would be circulated to the departments. He clarified that non-EU students receive a EU-fee waiver as part of the award. He explained that annually 10 bursaries were awarded to non-EU holders of other Trinity awards on a competitive basis for the purpose of topping up the difference between the EU and non-EU fee levels. With regard to a query about what constitutes teaching-related duties, the Dean explained that all such duties would need to be of academic and professional benefit to the student. Departments were free to interpret that provision locally with an understanding that students in disagreement could complain to the Head of Department, and then to the Dean. The allocation of duties would be at the discretion of the Head of Department. Notwithstanding the need for transparency in the allocation of duties to students across departments it was acknowledged that it would not be practicable to be overtly prescriptive in this respect since allowance would need to be made to account for differences in students' skills, different stages in their research progress, and local practices in individual departments which, for example, might not permit first-year students to take up teaching. The Dean clarified that Heads of Department had the final responsibility for supervising the scheme even though supervisors would also need to play a role. He re-confirmed that performance in teaching-related duties would not impact on the student's assessment of academic progress. He also emphasised that the postgraduate studentship is in its essence primarily a student award and not a "back door" means of additional allocation of resources to the Head of Department to cover departmental teaching. It was intended to review the scheme after one year.

In response to M. Dowling's query whether it would be possible to apply for some funding from the emergency fund announced by the Provost recently in order to alleviate the reduction in postgraduate tutoring and increase the value of postgraduate College awards, the Dean indicated that while this had not been explicitly excluded he would not be hopeful of success given the current financial climate in College.

In response to another query from M. Dowling, the Dean confirmed that the current financial cuts were also affecting the operations of the Graduate Studies Office, which was only permitted to replace a recent permanent vacancy with a temporary contract, but that the full extent of the cuts in the office budget would be known in early January 2004.

174.5 Any Other Business

Mr Trevor Peare raised an issue of the electronic submission and storage of research theses. He was aware of a company, which had a facility for providing such storage on demand. The Dean noted that a copyright law in the U.K. had been extended to electronic media. He proposed that the issue be put as a separate item on the agenda of some future meeting for a more comprehensive discussion.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.00 am. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 5th February 2004.

Prof. John Saeed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saeed', written in a cursive style.

Signed:

Date: 5 February 2004