

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 24 January, 2008  
Conference Room, Arts Building

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**Present:** Prof. Carol O'Sullivan, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),  
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:  
Dr Joe McDonagh, School of Business  
Dr Anne O'Connell, School of Dental Science  
Mr Brendan Tangney, School of Computer Science & Statistics  
Dr Matthew Causey, School of Drama, Film & Music  
Prof. Biswajit Basu, School of Engineering  
Dr Gail McElroy, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy  
Dr Richard Porter, School of Biochemistry & Immunology  
Prof. Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies  
Dr Richard Timoney, School of Mathematics  
Dr Iain Atack, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics  
Dr Kenneth Irvine, School of Natural Sciences  
Dr Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology  
Dr John Clancy, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Prof. Nicholas Grene, School of English  
Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, School of Social Work & Social Policy  
Dr Hazel Dodge, School of Histories & Humanities  
Dr Philip Matthews, School of Education  
Dr Fintan Sheerin, School of Nursing & Midwifery  
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (*Ex officio*)  
Mr John Lawlor, MIS Manager (*Ex officio*)  
Dr Jacqueline Potter, C.A.P.S.L.  
Mr Alessio Frenda, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)  
Mr Gabriel Magee, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

**Apologies:** Dr David Lloyd, Dean of Research (*Ex officio*)  
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:  
Prof. Seamus Martin, Vice Deanery of Genetics & Microbiology  
Prof. John Kelly, School of Chemistry  
Dr Neville Cox, School of Law  
Prof. John Saeed, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences  
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, School of Physics  
Dr Thomas Connor (Acting), School of Medicine

**In attendance:** Ms Ewa Sadowska, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)  
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

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The Dean welcomed to the first meeting of the Committee its two new members: Dr Hazel Dodge (replacing Prof. Eunan O'Halpin) from the School of Histories & Humanities and Dr Jacqueline Potter from C.A.P.S.L.

### 205.0 Minutes of 13 December 2007

The minutes of the meeting of 13 December, 2007 were approved by the Committee as circulated.

#### 205.1 Matters Arising

No matters arising were raised.

#### 205.2 M.Phil. in Musicology and Music Theory (1 yr f-t)

The Dean welcomed the proposed course director, Dr Martin Adams, from the School of Drama, Film and Music, and invited him to speak to the circulated proposal. Dr Adams explained that the new course is designed to offer a grounding in two core areas within the academic study of music: Musicology (historical, critical and analytical), and Music Theory. Many universities offer postgraduate taught programmes in Musicology but fewer offer equivalent courses in Music Theory. Within Ireland, the nearest equivalents to Trinity's new course are the one-year masters in historical musicology at UCD, the MA in musicology at NUI Maynooth, and the MA in musicology at Queen's University Belfast. The aim of Trinity's new course differs from these that it includes music theory and a wide range of musicological and critical applications. For the same reasons, it offers competition to equivalent courses in the UK.

The new course is designed to offer, where possible, shared or interdisciplinary modules, although the need for prior musical training means that the number of such modules is limited. In particular, one module focussed around music as a cultural phenomenon, is designed so to be available to students on the School's other M.Phil. courses. Although the larger part of the module on Research Methodologies in Music is specialist, it is anticipated that some individual lectures can be shared with equivalent modules in the other M.Phils. All students will take three modules throughout Michaelmas and Hilary terms, plus the module in Research Methodologies that will be spread across Michaelmas and Hilary Terms and, via dissertation supervision, into Trinity term. Students will therefore take a total of seven modules during the entire course. That breadth reflects the research and teaching strengths of the current staff. Within Musicology, all those who will participate in teaching can offer aspects of historical and analytical musicology. The new course underpins the School's strategic plan to strengthen recruitment to PhD programmes and to provide an important training element to new graduate students. Dr Adams also spoke in some detail about entry requirements to the course, staffing arrangements, and finance. The Dean thanked Dr Adams for his presentation.

In a short discussion which followed a few issues were raised and the following clarifications were obtained:

- a) with respect to the proposed fee, Dr Adams explained that it is at a similar level to that of UK-based courses but significantly lower than in the USA. The Dean has re-confirmed the principle that it is down to the School Accountant to determine the fee and up to the ARAM Task Force to approve it subsequently, and that the remit of the Graduate Studies Committee is to approve the academic integrity of the course;
- b) that a deletion of "repeat examination" is necessary from the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph at the bottom on page 7 of the proposal and a paragraph on assessment needs to be reviewed in the Calendar Part 2 entry;
- c) that the dissertation worth 25 ECTS together with its underpinning research methodology module worth 5 ECTS make up the required 30 ECTS-worth of research component on this course.

A general opinion was expressed that it is down to the Schools in their strategic plans to determine what taught masters courses they require, and it is not the role of the Graduate Studies committee to consider the impact on the School with respect to any financial ARAM-related consequences of such courses. Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services wished it to be noted that the Library would welcome some direct contribution from the course income in order to enhance its resources to be made available to the prospective students in the area, and was happy to support this new course proposal on that understanding.

The Committee approved the proposal for submission to the University Council subject to any additional amendments that may be required following the assessor's report.

### **205.3 M.Phil. in Irish Film, Music and Theatre (1 yr f-t)**

The Dean welcomed the proposed course director, Dr Melissa Sihra, from the School of Drama, Film and Music, and invited her to speak to the circulated proposal. Dr Sihra noted that the proposed M.Phil. in Irish Film, Music and Theatre is closely linked with the strategic development of Irish studies research and teaching in the School. There are currently no taught postgraduate courses in Irish film, music and theatre available in Ireland or elsewhere. This interdisciplinary M.Phil. will therefore be unique and should have wide appeal both locally and amongst non-EU applicants. At a time when Irish film, music, and theatre have unprecedented international profiles, this inter-disciplinary M.Phil. will provide an opportunity to study these three disciplines at an advanced level. The School has proven expertise in two of the three constituent disciplines i.e. in Irish film and drama. While it has yet to appoint an Irish music specialist, the new course can proceed with bought-in part-time teaching and supervision in this area. Shared or inter-disciplinary modules are being widely offered in the School, where appropriate and where quotas allow. The course is almost exclusively text-based and non-technical, though those choosing to write a dissertation relating to Irish music may, at that stage, engage with technical aspects of music.

Dr Sihra spoke in more detail about the academic structure of the course and its entry requirements and clarified some queries. With respect to the staffing arrangements and finance a particular query was raised that there appeared to be no provision made in the fee to fund a part-time lecturer's position in the area of music, and consequently the fee level was deemed to be too low. Dr Causey, the DTLP in the School, explained that the School has in place an ear-marked funding for this post. He also clarified that a significant number of modules to be taught by Dr Sihra on the new course are already in place, as modules are being pooled for shared teaching, so Dr Sihra's teaching load is not set to increase. However, notwithstanding the benefits of modules shared across the School, Dr Causey noted that research methodologies of each constituent "strand" of the course i.e. film, music and theatre were so divergent that they would need to be taught separately. A general issue of a common fee for each course in a School was raised as the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies is currently assessing the feasibility of such a development in their area.

Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services wished it to be noted that the Library would welcome some direct contribution from the course income in order to enhance its resources to be made available to the prospective students on the course, and was happy to support this new proposal on that understanding.

The Committee approved the proposal for submission to the University Council subject to consideration of raising the fee and implementing any additional amendments that may be required following the assessor's report.

**205.4M.Phil. in Classics (P.Grad.Dip. exit only) (1 yr f-t)**

The Dean welcomed Prof. Brian McGing, Head of Department of Classics in the School of Histories and Humanities, and invited him to speak to the circulated proposal. Prof. McGing explained that the Department is unusual both in Ireland and Britain in having expertise that represents all major strands of Classical scholarship, literary and philosophical, historical and archaeological. By offering a taught Masters the Department will be opening itself to a potentially important source of high quality students, international and local, who lack some of the necessary specific skills for a degree by research alone. One of the main gaps is language expertise, and students will be offered the opportunity to begin either Greek or Latin, or improve their level of knowledge. Taught postgraduate degrees in Classics are available in most other leading international universities. The new course will aim to provide students with an essential grounding in postgraduate research and learning, thus ensuring that high-performing students who complete the programme will have the training necessary to progress to the research register. This accounts for enhanced research-related components in the course structure. The new course will however represent an end in itself, providing students with the analytical, written, and verbal communication skills, and the knowledge and insight necessary in order to progress in their chosen careers outside the university and education sectors. The development of this course is referred to specifically in the School Strategic Plan, in particular by its contribution to the School's major research strand 'Constructions of Europe'.

Prof. McGing also spoke about the course's entry requirements being raised for applicants from the USA to GPA of 3.5 rather than the currently used 3.3, in order to ensure high quality of applicants.

The Dean thanked Prof. McGing for his presentation and the Committee approved the proposal for submission to the University Council subject to any additional amendments that may be required following the assessor's report.

**205.5GSC Working Party on PhD Structure**

The Dean introduced this item by reminding the committee that the Working Party on the PhD Structure was set up at the last meeting in order to investigate what constitutes a TCD PhD degree, what regulations should go into the Calendar Part 2, and what should be considered local requirements to be laid down in Schools' research handbooks. The Working Party chaired by the Dean, and consisting of Prof. John Kelly, Dr Tom Connor, Prof. John Saeed, Prof. Michael Marsh, Keith Creedon (ARAM) and Prof. John Scattergood (Bologna), met on 20 December 2007 and came up with a number of recommendations, listed below, approved by the Committee after a short discussion:

- 1) that Calendar Part 2 conveys a clear idea that there is one type of TCD-PhD by research, based on a transfer procedure from the Masters' to the PhD register. GREPs, structured PhDs, or integrated PhDs would all be considered as local variants of the core definition;
- 2) that the current three entries (on page 61, 141 and 142) on specific integrated PhD programmes in Political Science, Neuroscience and Molecular Medicine be taken out of the Calendar Part 2 2008 and put into local School Course Handbooks; that the current Calendar should be reviewed in order to remove any references to an integrated PhD concept;
- 3) that with immediate effect all research students be accepted on to the general research register;
- 4) that the Dean liaise with the Treasurer's Office in order to find the best way of charging different fees for School-defined PhD "programmes" or years of programmes when appropriate.
- 5) that local School course handbooks convey any specific regulations pertaining to additional requirements on research students, e.g., to attend generic and discipline-specific modules, without these requirements being laid out in the Calendar Part 2, subject to those requirements not being in conflict with general Calendar Part 2 regulations, and subject to the local School handbooks being officially approved;
- 6) that not more than 30 ECTS in total be allocated to taught elements over the first two years of the research Masters/PhD degree;
- 7) that, as a general principle, modules developed for research programmes be available to all students who are interested or for whom they are relevant, irrespective of how they are being funded;
- 8) that the current level descriptor entry 1.26.4 on page 26 be reviewed and re-titled to specifically reflect its relevance to PhD degrees by research, and that another entry should be submitted for approval by the GSC to reflect its relevance for professional doctorate degrees only;
- 9) that an issue of an internal examiner in the current integrated PhD in political science be reviewed;
- 10) that Prospectus 2008 can still advertise structured PhD programmes in the Schools, in the first instance for Political Science, Molecular Medicine and Neuroscience, but without listing them as "integrated PhDs";

With respect to point 4, it was noted that year 1 on the current integrated PhD in political science has a substantially higher annual fee than the corresponding MLitt. The Dean has undertaken to discuss the issue, and the concept of bench fees, further with Keith Creedon.

With respect to point 5, it was agreed that consideration should be given to the forum which should approve School booklets including some committee at a Faculty level or the Graduate Studies Committee or its future equivalent, and that a resulting Calendar Part 2 change will require an insertion of a statement to paragraph 2.1 on page 32 that "Research students are required to comply with requirements to attend generic and discipline-specific modules as specified in local course handbooks, which should be made available to students on entry, subject to those requirements not being in conflict with general Calendar Part 2 regulations." Some mechanism of quality control of locally delivered modules should be identified.

With respect to point 6 it was agreed that there should not be in principle any requirement for students to pass any taught modules in years 3 and 4 after their PhD transfer, and that research methodology seminars should not carry any ECTS allocation

With respect to point 8 the Dean noted that Prof. Scattergood was due to speak to doctoral degrees draft descriptors as the forthcoming agenda item.

#### **205.6 PhD/Professional Doctorate Level Descriptors**

The Dean invited Prof. John Scattergood to speak to the circulated document. Prof. Scattergood explained that the Professional Doctorate is a relatively new degree in Ireland but it is gaining in popularity. This has been enhanced by the attention given to the doctoral qualifications in the Bologna process. Currently, there are three Professional Doctorates in Trinity, i.e. in Education, Dental Surgery and Clinical Psychology. Prof. Scattergood noted that his submission is partly an information document and partly a response to the task requested of him by the Working Party to write two level descriptors which would separate out research PhD from the new developing professional doctoral degree as both are currently encapsulated into one entry in Calendar part 2 2007 (1.26.4 on page 26). He alerted the committee to the issue of "name" in that if PhD is retained as one general research degree it may not have any specific names other than Doctor in Philosophy whereas it is appropriate to give designated name to each new Professional Doctorate to differentiate one programme from another. With respect to the issue of "level", he clarified that in Ireland a Professional Doctorate is equivalent to, although different from, a research PhD (not withstanding the fact that in some countries PhD is considered at a higher level than the Professional Doctorate). In Ireland both are at level 10 and deemed equivalent according to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. It was noted that they are treated differently in terms of attracting HEA funding to the Universities. The Dean has thanked Prof. Scattergood for undertaking this exercise, and the Committee was happy to approve both entries i.e. for Research Doctorates (subject to deletion of "in a knowledge-based society") and Professional Doctorates as separate (at Level 10 NQAI) for inclusion in Calendar part 2 in 2008.

#### **205.7 Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework: sub-degree awards**

The Dean invited Prof. Scattergood to speak to the circulated document on the College's implementation sub-degree awards (Higher and Postgraduate Diplomas) within the National Qualifications Framework. Prof. Scattergood explained that given that these Diplomas have already been designated major award-types on the Framework, and that the profile of the individual Trinity awards accords with the NQAI level descriptors, efforts in College have been concentrated on completing the allocation of credit to individual programmes in line with the normative credit volumes identified (Higher Diplomas in the range 60-120 credits and Postgraduate Diplomas at 60 credits). The College was not initially asked to submit details of programmes leading to these awards. However, in the context of issues arising for other universities, the College has been invited now to submit a summary list of all sub-degree awards, including all Higher and Postgraduate Diplomas, so that the submission to the NQAI reflects the complete picture across the university sector (with the exception of programmes in Education). The circulated document records the title, award type, Framework level and credit volume of existing Trinity Higher and Postgraduate Diplomas. Prof. Scattergood explained that it is envisaged that where credit allocation is still in process, this will be completed (at least at programme level) prior to submission to the IUA in mid-February. For a number of reasons, it has not been possible to significantly advance the implementation of the ECTS in postgraduate programmes in the School of Medicine, and a supplementary submission will be necessary before the end of the current academic year. Prof. Scattergood invited the Committee to note the programme details and forward any questions to the Bologna Desk after the meeting.

#### **205.8 Any Other Business**

- a) The Committee noted a memo from the Academic Secretary to the Information Policy Committee on the Postgraduate Application Centre (PAC) system project tabled at the meeting. Mr John Lawlor, the MIS Manager, noted that most of the issues listed for resolution in that memo were not likely to affect the proposed full roll out, and therefore he hoped that when the proposal gets before the Information Policy Committee it will be accepted.
- b) The Committee noted and approved the proposed Calendar Part 2 changes for 2008 as listed in Section B on the agenda.
- c) The Committee noted as a Calendar Part 2 change for 2008 the information on Postgraduate Ussher Fellowship: in terms of an increase of the Fellowship maintenance level from 2007/08 as per the formal minute of the Executive Officers from its meeting of 17 Dec 2007:  
EO/07-08/100 Postgraduate Ussher Fellowship The memorandum dated 12 December 2007 from the Dean of Graduate Studies was noted and approval was given for an increase in the maintenance awards for 2007-2008 from €12,700 pa to €16,000 pa.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11.55 am.

