

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 19 February, 2009
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Prof. Carol O'Sullivan, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Richard Porter, School of Biochemistry & Immunology
Dr Joe McDonagh, School of Business
Dr Matthew Causey, School of Drama, Film & Music
Prof. Brian Broderick, School of Engineering
Dr Darryl Jones, School of English
Dr Hazel Dodge, School of Histories & Humanities
Prof. Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Dr Jeffrey Kallen, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Dr Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics
Dr Thomas Connor, School of Medicine
Dr Paula Murphy, School of Natural Sciences
Dr Fintan Sheerin, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Dr Andrew Harkin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, School of Physics
Dr Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology
Dr Gillian Wylie, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Dr Robert Thomson, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)
Mr Michael McGrath, Acting Manager of MIS (*Ex officio*)
Mr Ronan Hodson, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Ms Alexandra Murphy, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

Apologies: Dr David Lloyd, Dean of Research
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Ms Carmel O'Sullivan, School of Education
Dr Seamus Martin, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Dr Jacqueline Potter, C.A.P.S.L. (in attendance)
Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Dr Carl Vogel, (*Acting*) School of Computer Science and Statistics
Prof. John Kelly, School of Chemistry
Dr Anne O'Connell, School of Dental Science
Dr Neville Cox, School of Law

In attendance: Mr Robert Otway-Norwood, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

GS/08-09/022 Minutes of 22 January 2009

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd January were approved by the Committee as circulated.

GS/08-09/023 Matters Arising

Erasmus Mundus

The Dean informed the Committee that the call for Erasmus Mundus II had been issued and that there was an information session organised by the HEA on Tuesday 24th February.

PRTL15

The Dean informed the Committee that internal expressions of interest were being considered by a panel chaired by the Provost.

Dr Sint informed the committee that there were technical problems with IRCSET, particularly when the supervisor is not registered. The Dean agreed that the office would seek clarification from IRCSET on the issue.

GS/08-09/024 Template for Research Students Handbooks and process for approval

The Dean spoke to her circulated document draft template for a Research Students Handbook for schools. The strategy for graduate education in college is that every school should have the flexibility to develop discipline specific requirements for research degrees, and that these should be detailed in a handbook. The Calendar would make explicit reference to these handbooks, thereby supporting the schools in their endeavours. It was agreed that the handbooks would be circulated to the committee for noting, but that if there were any controversial or significant issues they would be raised for discussion. It was further agreed that the booklet would be updated and changes noted on an annual basis, as is the case with calendar changes. Where there are more complex inter-school programmes, these should have their own handbook that should be signed off by every school. The Graduate Student representatives pointed out the handbook provided an opportunity to inform students what they can expect from their school and supervisor and suggested that relevant sections of the calendar would be included in overview form. It was noted that inconsistencies between Calendar and Handbooks must be avoided.

The Dean asked that members forward any further comments or suggested amendments to her over the next week, and she will incorporate them into the draft. The Dean informed the committee that it is intended to have all school handbooks in place for the 09/10 academic year. After discussion, the committee agreed that it would be desirable for all handbooks to have a similar "look and feel" to other University materials, such as the Prospectus, and she undertook to ask the designers to come up with a customisable cover template, which schools could adapt for their own purposes. It was further agreed that the school handbooks be referred to as the 'Research Student Handbook' and would cover both Masters and PhD students.

In response to a query the Dean pointed that the issue of defining and approving Modules and ECTS credits will be dealt with through a separate process which is being put in place. Such modules should not be detailed in the handbook, or at least not for the purposes of approval.

GS/08-09/025 M.Sc. in Sociology

The Dean welcomed Dr Peter Mühlau from the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, and invited him to speak to the circulated document.

Dr Mühlau explained that the proposed Masters offers a rigorous training in research skills models, and is aimed amongst others towards those who wish to progress to doctoral research, or pursue careers in social policy, applied policy research and future policy makers. Dr Mühlau confirmed that the proposed course forms part of the School's strategic plan, and that they know that there is strong demand for the areas of migration, ethnicity and race. He pointed out that the course will replace and integrate the M.Phil. in Ethnic and Racial Studies, and that there are already a number of students enquiring about the course.

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

GS/08-09/026 M.Phil. European Studies

The Dean welcomed Dr Balázs Apor from the School of Languages Literature and Cultural Studies Centre for European Studies, and invited him to speak to the circulated document.

Dr Apor informed the committee that the school had been planning the course for a number of years, and that they were launching it following the success of the Undergraduate Degree in European Studies, which had a very high level of entry points, and that it is intended to extend this success at Post Graduate level. He explained that this course forms part of a more ambitious strategy of the school to establish a research centre in European Studies capable of attracting EU funds, high quality students and research fellows. He noted that the launch of the programme is timely, given the recent enlargement of the EU, and that it is anticipated that it will create revenue for the school. A discussion followed about grading and distinctions, and the allocation of ECTS credits, which the course director agreed to reflect in the revised document. In response to a suggestion that use be made of new lecturers in the provision of the course, it was pointed out that Dr Apor is a new appointment.

The committee approved the course for submission to the University Council subject to the revised wording and any additional amendments that may be required following the assessor's report.

GS/08-09/027 M.Sc. Advanced Radiotherapy

The Dean welcomed Mrs Mary Coffey from the School of Medicine (Division of Radiation Therapy), and invited her to speak to the circulated document.

Mrs Coffey explained to the meeting that the proposal was the culmination of work over a number of years, and represented the first rollout of a suite of Masters reflecting several different areas of practice. Mrs Coffey stated that there is a strong demand for the course from clinical personnel. She pointed out that the proposed course will be provided by the Division of Radiation Therapy in conjunction with clinical radiotherapy departments nationwide, the clinical trial staff of Belfast City Hospital, and will run on a part time basis over two years to facilitate radiation therapists working in clinical practice. Mrs Coffey noted that this is a small discipline, that Trinity College is the only provider of such a course in the country, and that a major centre for radiation therapy will be developed shortly on the St. James's Hospital site. In this context she pointed out that currently a lot of students are going to the UK, and that it is hoped that this course will fill this need here in Ireland.

In answer to a query as to whether it would be possible to complete the course in one year, Mrs Coffey stated that it is envisaged that the course will be for two years.

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

GS/08-09/028 Fitness to Practice Policy

The Dean welcomed Dr Gerry Whyte, the Dean of Students, and invited him to speak to the circulated document. It was noted that the policy on Garda Vetting is currently being reviewed by College and noted that where applicable each school should establish a fitness to practice committee with certain powers including in some situations the power to 'suspend'.

During discussion, the issue that provision of 'reasonable accommodations' was considered to be with respect to the context of the College's overall budget was discussed and concerns were raised that this cost could be prohibitive for smaller schools. Dr Whyte agreed that he would raise this issue in the relevant quarters, and noted that since this a matter of state funding it is a sectoral issue.

In response to a query concerning whether the title should be 'fitness to study' rather than 'fitness to practice', Dr Whyte noted that the policy is not relevant to everyone, and that this is the title currently used by the College. It was noted that in some cases the fitness to practice policy may apply for undergraduate students, whereas postgraduate students may already be registered practitioners and will therefore be governed by the policy of the relevant official body.

GS/08-09/029 Research Supervision Award

The Dean spoke to a proposal, developed together with Dr. Jacqueline Potter of Capsl, for an award for excellence in Research Supervision. During discussion, it was agreed that all forms of doctoral research supervision would be considered and the committee gave its approval for implementing the proposal.

GS/08-09/030 Learning Outcomes

The Dean welcomed Professor John Scattergood and invited him to speak to the circulated document. Professor Scattergood stated that the purpose of the document was to provide an update on Learning Outcomes. He urged schools, if they were not already doing so, to engage fully in the process, as College is fully committed to implementation. Professor Scattergood drew attention to the fact that draft programme outcomes were to be submitted by Friday 6th March. He further pointed out that the programme outcomes remain in draft format until such time as learning outcomes for all modules have been written, and that the draft module outcomes should be forwarded to the bologna office by the end of May 2009. It was noted that the outcomes are required to be kept centrally. Professor Scattergood pointed out that the relationship between the outcomes and assessment is critical, and to ensure that the assessment is written in such a way as to fulfil the outcome. He noted that whenever a university has moved to availing of outcomes in the context of modularisation the amount of assessment increases, and urged schools to ensure that all are aware of this, and that the assessment does not increase to impossible levels.

The Dean emphasised the importance of this process for College and encouraged schools to engage fully.

GS/08-09/031 Any Other Business.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.43 am.

Prof. Carol O'Sullivan

Date: 19 February 2009