

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE**

**GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 9a.m. on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013  
Boardroom, Provost's House

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**Present:** Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Martin Fellenz, School of Business

Professor Graeme Watson, School of Chemistry

Professor Simon Wilson, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Ebrahim Al Awadi, School of Dental Science

Professor Damian Murchan, School of Education

Professor Roger West, School of Engineering

Professor Martine Cuypers, School of Histories & Humanities

Professor Anne Fitzpatrick, School of Languages, Literatures and  
Cultural Studies

Professor Alex Schuster, School of Law

Professor Christer Gobl, School of Linguistic, Speech and  
Communication Sciences

Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics

Professor Orla Sheils, School of Medicine

Professor Anna Davies, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Anne-Marie Brady, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Lidia Tajber, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical  
Sciences

Professor Louise Bradley, School of Physics

Professor David Hevey, School of Psychology

Professor Carlo Aldrovandi, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and  
Ecumenics

Professor Tim Hicks, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Professor Stephanie Holt, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research (*Ex officio*)

Ms Alex Anderson, CAPSL Representative (*Ex officio*)

Ms Lee Mills, Information System Services Representative (*Ex officio*)

Mr Ryan Kenny, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)

Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)

**Apologies:** Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Melissa Sihra, School of Drama, Film & Music

Ms Sara Smith, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

**In attendance:** Ms Jennifer Hill, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting  
(*Ex officio*)

Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office (*Ex officio*)  
Ms Michelle Hogan, Graduate Studies Office (*Ex officio*)

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The Dean introduced herself and welcomed the Committee to the first meeting of the academic year. The Committee members introduced themselves.

**GS/13-14/01 Minutes of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013**

The minutes were approved by the Committee as circulated.

**Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

The minutes were approved by the Committee as circulated.

**GS/13-14/02 Matters Arising**

The Dean updated the Committee regarding the Postgraduate Diploma in Orthodontic Therapy. As recommended by the Graduate Studies Committee (**GS/12-13/37**) a sub-committee (comprising the Dean, Professor Martin Fellenz, Professor Anne-Marie Brady, Ms. Alex Anderson and Professor Ebrahim Al-Awadi) was set up to further discuss the proposal, paying particular attention to assessment. The sub-committee's recommendations have been provided to the School of Dental Science and further amendments are to be made to the proposal before it is sent for external review.

The Dean confirmed that the Student Charter (**GS/12-13/46**) is still a work in progress.

The Dean notified the Committee that the M.Phil. in Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurship launched last week and the home school for the course has been confirmed as the School of Computer Science and Statistics.

The Dean informed the Committee that the Professional Masters in Education received a positive external review, has been approved by the University Council and is now under review with the Teaching Council.

**GS/13-14/03 Performance Doctorates – Level Descriptor**

The Dean introduced Professor John Scattergood and invited him to speak to the circulated document.

Professor Scattergood explained that due to the recent partnership with the Royal Irish Academic of Music (RIAM) and the introduction of the validated Doctorate in Music Performance there is a requirement to have a Performance Doctorate level descriptor to define what this is and what standards are required to achieve this level of qualification.

Professor Scattergood provided the Committee with the background to why we need to have level descriptors, noting that Levels 7, 8, 9 and 10 apply to University qualifications and that any new degree, diploma or award must be mapped on to the 10 point scale to provide a level descriptor of what someone who is being given a particular award can be reasonably expected to do. The Calendar Part 2 includes level descriptors written in 2005/2006 (the level descriptor for Professional Doctorates was added more recently).

Professor Scattergood noted to the Committee that Professional Doctorates must meet the same standard as traditional doctorates and the same applies for

Performance Doctorates, adding that the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) state that performance itself is not necessarily a research activity.

Professor Scattergood noted that as there is only one Performance Doctorate offered at present the set of criteria provided for this level descriptor has been written at a high level of generality so this may need to be developed and modified over time.

In response to a query it was agreed that point 4 of the Level Descriptor should be amended to “artistic or professional”.

There was some discussion regarding how this type of degree is archived, possibly by the performance being recorded or filmed. It was noted that while performances are not replicable there would need to be a record of it and queried whether any other documentation such as a log, diary would be required. It was agreed that a process should be put in place for consideration of this.

A query was raised regarding the wording of the last two points which states “That they can be expected to...” and it was agreed to amend this to “That they can be expected to be able to...” in line with the Research Doctorates and Professional Doctorates Level Descriptors.

In answer to a query it was confirmed that the understanding is that a student needs to attain all bullet points listed in the Level Descriptor rather than a sub-set of these but it was agreed that this should be defined.

It was confirmed that this Level Descriptor has been considered by the QQI who were helpful in developing it.

It was agreed that the document would be amended in light of the comments made and prepared for inclusion in the Calendar Part 2.

### **GS/13-14/04 Master in Pharmacy (M.Pharm.)**

The Dean introduced Professor Sheila Ryder and invited her to speak to the circulated document.

Professor Ryder informed the Committee that, at present, in order to receive formal qualification as a pharmacist, students must complete at least four years of full-time university study plus an additional pre-registration practical training year. Since 2009 the pre-registration year has taken the form of a one-year M.Pharm. programme delivered on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). It is expected that the PSI will invite tenders for delivery of the programme commencing 2014 and the proposed course has been devised to replace the M.Pharm. currently offered by the RCSI. While it is anticipated that the PSI will require an integrated five year M.Pharm. programme, there will still be a transition period and requirement for this one year programme while this is introduced.

Professor Ryder noted that the course has been developed to be distance learning as students will be in placements and will carry out activities and be mentored by the preceptor in their workplace.

The content of the course is six 10 credit modules and a seventh 30 credit module (which runs parallel). The method of assessment is continuous assessment. As governed by the legislation the course will be delivered over a 12 month year, September – September. On conclusion of the placement each student will be signed off by work place preceptors. In addition, students will be required to take the Professional Registration Examination (PRE) and may only present for this examination following successful completion of all other elements of the M.Pharm. programme and, as such, this will need to be held outside of the normal examination periods, in week six of the subsequent academic year.

In answer to a query in relation to the tender Professor Ryder confirmed that indications show that a single course will be approved as the PSI are reluctant to have a collaborative group and want to deal with one institution. If TCD are not successful in winning the tender we won't be in a position to run the course. In terms of financial support, although the RCSI received seed funding from PSI, it is not clear whether this will be forthcoming for us if successful. It is possible that the RCSI received funding because student fees were paid directly to the PSI and passed on to RCSI.

It was noted that while the library are very supportive of this course they may face some challenges in providing some of the electronic resources. All students will need to be fully registered students to gain access and all preceptors will need to be recognised as staff to gain their access. It was discussed that it may be possible for the Faculty HR to organise the required access through recognition of these individuals similar to the way that clinical tutors are recognised.

It was noted that tutors / preceptors need to be recognised by PSI and approved by College. The pool need to be identified in advance to ensure they have the appropriate mentoring and assessment skills. Students can then find a tutor that is appropriate for them.

It was agreed that further consideration would need to be given to the point at which appointments can be made (if possible).

In answer to a query regarding where the PRE grades are monitored at the first court of examiners and then brought to second court and whether the second court can change the PRE marks it was noted that the second court is a sub-set of the first (same people minus PSI) and the intention is that grades would be finalised at the first court. It was noted that further clarification should be provided on this and also noted that the same appointed PSI person cannot sit on court of examiners *and* appeals committee.

A query was raised regarding the Research module and it was noted that 10 lecture hours seems low / inadequate given that the total workload is 750 hours and agreed that further consideration would be given to this.

In answer to a query about the research project supervision it was confirmed that students will have an academic supervisor and at a direct level in the workplace they will be supervised by the preceptor. It was requested that further consideration be given to managing the turnaround of 160 research projects and to the fall out of group projects as there is the potential for an increased number of appeals.

It was confirmed that lectures will be delivered by a combination of both download and interactive. There will be podcast material pre-recorded and an extensive amount of interactive lectures such as webinars.

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

### **GS/13-14/05 Results for taught postgraduate courses in SITS 2012/13 and 2013/14**

The Dean explained that the circulated document is an important update on what we can and should do for this year's academic mark entry and progression and what will be happening going forward.

The Dean introduced Ms Aoife Long and asked her to provide further details to the Committee. Ms Long explained that in relation to postgraduate students,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of modular assessment marks have been entered. The system is ready to be used but there are certain aspects that need to be set up for users to enter results. Users also need to be trained.

In answer to a query regarding whether students will be progressed through SITS or whether this will be manual process it was confirmed that SITS will not calculate the overall mark and this will need to be done manually through spreadsheets and entered in to SITS.

A query was raised regarding students on two-year part-time courses and whether last year's historical modules need to be set up and module marks entered in order to calculate the overall mark next year and it was agreed that it would be important to do this for the provision of transcripts.

It was explained that the assessment, progression and award component of SITS is very complex and resources are wholly inadequate. As resources have been dedicated to undergraduate assessment since January it has not been possible to allocate resources to postgraduate taught courses.

It was confirmed that a meeting needs to be convened to update School Administrators regarding this. Taught postgraduate courses are very different from undergraduate as the timing of assessment is more spread out and the administration of courses is less embedded with School Administrators. There is also a lack of formality for progressing part-time students from year 1 to year 2. Decisions will need to be made on who the Progression Managers will be - there should be at least two within each School but Schools with multiple courses should give consideration to additional individuals being trained on this (although it should be noted that this kind of knowledge cannot be too dispersed as this will make it less effective and less efficient).

#### **GS/13-14/06 AOB**

The Dean reiterated to the Committee the importance of the Structured Ph.D. reminding them that all Ph.D. students are on a structured Ph.D. and must take a minimum of 10 ECTS. She noted that there is no way of logging this centrally at this time but there is a box to be ticked by DTLPG/ supervisor on the Examiner Nomination Form to say that the student has completed this.

It was confirmed that Level 8 courses (e.g. modules taken as pre-requisites) are not to be considered part of the 10 ECTS.

The Committee were reminded that every Ph.D. student must have an annual Progress Report at the end of each year and must complete the Confirmation on the Ph.D. midway through year 2. It was noted that Research Management in SITS will be implemented shortly and will assist in tracking and recording this.

The Committee were reminded of the Research Supervision booklet, copies of which have been sent out and are also available online.

A concern was raised regarding the deposit of €500 payable by taught course applicants at conditional offer stage and the possibility that students are being lost due to the requirement to pay this. It was confirmed that this will continue to be required for taught course applicants but that offers can be extended if the student is unable to pay the deposit at the time of offer. It was also noted that research applicants are not charged a deposit.

The Graduate Student's Union noted that the Postgraduate Orientation was a huge success this year, extending a welcome to more postgraduate students than previously and offered thanks to the Dean, GSO, Schools, Library, Sports Centre, and all others who participated in this.

It was noted that sanctions on plagiarism at College level need discussion and agreed that consideration would be given to having this as an agenda item for discussion at a future meeting.

**Section C for noting**

1. The Committee noted and approved the memo from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer regarding Postgraduate Awards.

There was some concern raised regarding the reduced stipend and noted that this may make it difficult to recruit good students.

It was also noted that the award still covers both EU and non-EU fees.

In answer to a query it was confirmed there is still a requirement for student to commit to 6 hours per week of demonstrating, teaching within the School.

Queries were also raised regarding the timing of the reduction of the stipend and whether this applies to incoming students only from 2014/15 or also to continuing students as continuing students may have already been advised that they are receiving three years of the award.

It was clarified that although reallocation of awards can now take place the intention is not for each award to be reallocated each year.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11.03am.

Prof. Aideen Long

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013