

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE**

**ITEM 1**

**GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 9am on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
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 Lucy Hederman, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
Professor Michael O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science  
Professor Roger West, School of Engineering  
Professor Damian Murchan, School of Education  
Professor David O'Shaughnessy, School of English  
Professor Anne Dolan, School of Histories & Humanities  
Professor Jürgen Uhlich, School of Languages, Literatures &  
Cultural Studies  
Professor Elizabeth Heffernan, School of Law  
Professor Christer Gobl, School of Linguistic, Speech &  
Communication Sciences  
Professor Patrick Wyse Jackson, School of Natural Sciences  
Professor John Gilmer, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical  
Sciences  
Professor David Hevey, School of Psychology  
Professor William Phelan, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
- Ms Katie Crowther, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)  
Dr Gianna Hegarty, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President  
(*Ex officio*)  
Ms Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian (in attendance *Ex officio*)  
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, CAPSL Representative  
(*Ex officio*)  
Ms Helen O'Hara, Information System Services Representative  
(in attendance *Ex officio*)
- Apologies:** Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:  
Professor Amir Khan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
Professor Frank Barry, School of Business  
Professor Dónall Mac Dónaill, School of Chemistry  
Professor Ruth Barton, School of Drama, Film and Music  
Professor Kevin Devine, School of Genetics and Microbiology  
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics  
Professor Orla Sheils, School of Medicine  
Professor Joan Lalor, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Professor Louise Bradley, School of Physics  
Professor Benjamin Wold, Confederal School of Religions, Peace  
Studies and Theology

Professor Virpi Timonen, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research (Ex officio)

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

Ms Gillian Roddie (Senior Tutor's Office) for item GS/15-16/3  
Dr Tamara O'Connor (Counselling: Student Learning Development)  
and Fiona Hayes (Careers Advisory Service) for item GS/15-16/4  
Ms Orla Sheehan (Academic Secretariat) for item GS/15-16/5  
Ms Roisin Smith and Ms Sarah Coyle (Trinity Teaching & Learning)  
for item GS/15-16/6

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The Dean welcomed in particular new members to the committee and kindly asked all members to introduce themselves.

**GS/15-16/1 Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015**

The minutes were approved by the Committee as circulated.

**GS/15-16/2 Matters Arising:**

*Re: GS/14-15/39 Report of the Academic Transcript Working Party:*

The Dean informed the committee that the work was still in progress and the issue of the PhD transcript will return to the committee for consideration at a future date.

*Re: GS/14-15/40 School of Business Course Proposals: i) M.Sc. in Financial Risk Management, ii) M.Sc. in International Finance, iii) M.Sc. in Investments, iv) M.Sc. in Marketing, v) M.Sc. in Advanced Accounting, vi) M.Sc. in Management with Finance, vii) M.Sc. in Management with Marketing, viii) M.Sc. in Management with Accounting, ix) P.Grad.Dip. in Accounting:*

The Dean advised that the sub-committee had reviewed the course proposals over the summer and thanked in particular Prof. Martine Cuypers for her immense input into rectifying the identified issues. All courses went for external review and some assessors were asked to review more than one course proposal. All assessment feedback returned was positive, and PG Dip in Accounting; MSc in Advanced Accounting; MSc in Investments; MSc in Marketing; MSc in Financial Risk Management were submitted to the University Council which approved them on 23 September.

*Action 1: It was agreed that the final versions of the course proposals approved by the University Council were to be circulated to the committee members.*

*Re GS/14-15/41 Report of working group on plagiarism:*

The Dean advised that an email from the Dean of Undergraduate and the Dean of Postgraduate Studies went out in mid-September to alert the College community to

the revised 2015/16 Calendar entry on plagiarism and to outline the steps taken to create a more coherent approach to educating students about plagiarism. The new Calendar entry was formulated in a more accessible way and contains revisions explaining to how cases or levels of plagiarism were to be classified and dealt with under summary procedures. In order to support students in understanding what plagiarism was and how to avoid it, an online central repository consolidating all information and resources on plagiarism was set up. It contains, among other things, an online mandatory tutorial on plagiarism, 'Ready, Steady, Write', to be completed by all undergraduate and postgraduate new entrants and existing students, and a text of a declaration to be inserted into all cover sheets accompanying course work to be assessed. The Dean clarified that level 1 offences would be recorded on student records in SITS in the module assessment area with restricted access but not on student transcripts. A short discussion followed and in response to one query the Dean advised that PhD students submitting under Dean's Grace in Michaelmas Term 2015 were not required to complete the 'Ready, Steady, Write' tutorial but that it was advisable for them to do so as an activity of good academic practice.

*GS/14-15/43 Policy on Joint and Dual Awards:*

The Dean informed the committee that a policy document, dated 5 June 2015, on joint, multiple and dual awards had been circulated to Council for discussion in June (CL/14-15/196), and that Council acknowledged that the discussion was useful to understand the complexity of the issues involved. She also noted that the Irish Universities Association (IUA) was discussing this policy area in order to develop a sectoral statement. One of the issues of particular importance was to ensure that definitions of what constitutes joint, multiple and dual awards were the same across the whole sector including Trinity. It was intended to re-draft the June policy document to reflect feedback coming from various sources: Council, IUA and internally from Trinity's administrative group and to present the amended iteration to Council again at a future date.

**GS/15-16/3 Postgraduate Advisory Service:**

Ms Gillian Roddie explained that the Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS) is part of the postgraduate support system within the Senior Tutor's Office. Ms Roddie's appearance at the committee was to increase awareness of the Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) (DTLP), and with their help, the awareness of other academic staff and postgraduate students in the Schools, of the range of pastoral services and financial supports PAS offered. In a short discussion which followed an issue of neutrality of the PAS was raised. Ms Roddie explained that on a continuum between the Senior Tutor's role to represent students' interests and the course coordinators' role to represent College interests the PAS approach was to represent students with College interests in mind. Ms Roddie offered to send PAS posters to the interested DTLPs in order that they could be put up in Schools to advertise PAS more efficiently.

**GS/15-16/4 Planning & Managing your Research & your Career Generic Skills Module for PhD students:**

Dr Tamara O'Connor from the Student Learning Development within the Counselling Service and Ms Fiona Hayes from the Careers Advisory Service spoke to the circulated module descriptor in order to raise awareness of DTLPs, and with their help, the awareness of other academic staff and postgraduate students in the Schools of this generic skills module. Dr O'Connor and Ms Hayes explained that they had been running the module annually in Michaelmas Term since 2010, that the module was open to all students on the PhD register in all disciplines, and that the student feedback was always very positive. In a discussion which followed there was a number of queries including a question as to whether the module could be open to research students on the Masters register since some students are entering the Masters register before they transfer to the PhD register. Dr O'Connor and Ms Hayes clarified that the module had been tailored to the requirements of PhD students specifically for example it was preparing the participants for the *viva voce* experience. They agreed to consider how Masters research students might participate in the module or whether it might be possible to design a Masters version of this module in the future.

**GS/15-16/5 Student Complaints Policy:**

Ms Orla Sheehan from the Academic Secretariat conveyed apologies from the Assistant Secretary who had been scheduled to speak to the policy document at the meeting but had been called to another urgent meeting. Ms Sheehan explained that a student complaints policy had been requested by the quality review of the then OVP in 2011 and subsequently by the Ombudsman. The proposed policy was extensively discussed last year and feedback was received from the College solicitor, the Officers, the Quality Committee (which twice had considered the proposal) and undergraduate and postgraduate representatives. The latter requested that the policy be based upon one central point for logging complaints, that the complainant should be kept informed of progress of the complaint, and that there should be an overall review of issues raised through the Student Complaints procedure. Accordingly, the proposed policy places responsibility for the procedure in the Secretary's Office where an initial assessment of the complaint will be made before, where appropriate, the complaint will be forwarded to the relevant party in College, e.g. Head of Area for investigation. The Quality Committee will be provided with an annual report on the operation of, and issues arising from, the procedure.

The proposed policy will not supersede any of the current policies for dealing with student complaints, courts of appeals and requests for re-checks and re-marks which was of concern to some committee members who suggested that the remit of the procedure in academic matters should be made more pronounced in the document. Ms Sheehan explained that the policy would cover student complaints about all aspects of the student experience – both academic and non-academic. An important aspect in introducing the procedure will be to emphasise that its remit is for complaints for serious issues and that it should only be invoked when informal approaches have not resolved the complaint. A member of the Committee suggested that Heads of School would need some guidance on how to conduct a complaint

bearing in mind that it is possible that reports may become part of a legal case at a future date. A further concern was expressed that the proposed policy appears to provide for a right of appeal to level 2 only in the case of the student, dis-regarding a corresponding right to an appeal by the staff member implicated in the complaint. It was also unclear at which point in the procedure the staff member complained against should be informed about the complaint and allowed the right of access to the complaint submission. A point was also made that in cases where complaints were associated with professional and/or clinical courses, staff with relevant clinical experience should be part of the level 2 appeal panel. In relation to Table 1: Stage 1 Process, a concern was raised that the three week turn around period (from receipt of the complaint to the provision of a written report to the student) was too short to give due diligence in collecting the data necessary to investigate the complaint without compromising the integrity of the process. It was suggested that should such a delay occur, an interim letter should be sent to the student with an update on the situation. In relation to Section 4.5.1, clarification was sought as to why a cut-off point of three months following final assessment/examination had been set for receipt of complaints and whether it was appropriate for students on the research register in particular where it is understood that complaints about research supervision were not entertained after the graduation. Ms Sheehan thanked the committee for their feedback which will be incorporated into the next iteration.

**GS/15-16/6 Trinity policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):**

The Quality Officer Ms Roisin Smith and Ms Sarah Coyle from Trinity Teaching and Learning spoke to the circulated document. Trinity does not have a written policy on recognition of prior learning, however in practice applications are received and processed for RPL in postgraduate programmes. Ms Smith referred to the FIN report stating that as good practice admission activity should be underpinned by a clear policy which provides guidelines as to what elements (taught or research) can be exempted giving due consideration to the requirements of accreditation bodies. A discussion followed in which the Dean re-confirmed that prior learning both experiential and certified is recognised in Trinity, and that care was being taken to evaluate the relevance of the applicant's experience being brought into the course and also the matching of learning outcomes of the course completed to the course applied for. The recognition of professional placements, double counting, rescinding of external degrees and the possibility of requests for a related fee remission resulting in income loss to College were all raised in a discussion, as was the issue of safeguarding the academic standards especially in professional courses such as Pharmacy.

The Academic Secretary referred to the fact that Life- Long Learning and RPL practices had been discussed on and off for some time in Trinity and an articulation of the policy to underpin these practices was to be welcomed. It was agreed that a RPL Working Group be established over the coming weeks spanning the Graduate and Undergraduate Studies Committees to discuss the matter, and that volunteers wishing to be on such a group should contact the Dean directly.

**GS/15-16/7 *Dean of Graduate Studies' Annual Report 2013/14 for University Council on 23 September 2015 including Postgraduate Admissions Data for 2014/15***

This item was deferred due to time constraints.

**GS/15-16/8            AOB**

No issues were raised.

**Section B for noting and approval**

B1. *Calendar 2015/16 Part III* retrospective changes:

- (i) The Committee noted and approved the proposed change on the Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Thinking, Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

B2. *Calendar 2016/17 Part III* changes:

- (i) The Committee noted and approved the proposed Calendar entry on the Professional Special Purpose Certificate in Academic Practice.

B3. The Committee noted and approved the proposed Trinity College Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities.

B4. The Committee noted and gave a retrospective approval for Trinity MBA Programme delivery formats: 1 year full time and 2 year part time.

There being no other business, the meeting ended.

Prof. Aideen Long

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015