



GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9am on Thursday 18th February 2016
Boardroom, Provost's House

XX = Council relevance

Present: Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*)
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Frank Barry, School of Business
Professor Dónall Mac Dónaill, School of Chemistry
Professor Lucy Hederman, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Michael O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Ruth Barton, School of Drama, Film and Music
Professor Damian Murchan, School of Education
Professor Roger West, School of Engineering
Professor Laura Cleaver, School of Histories & Humanities
Professor Elizabeth Heffernan, School of Law
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics
Professor Stephen Smith, School of Medicine
Professor Joan Lalor, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Louise Bradley, School of Physics
Professor David Hevey, School of Psychology
Professor William Phelan, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Ms Helen O'Hara, Information System Services Representative
(in attendance *Ex officio*)
Ms Katie Crowther, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Dr Gianna Hegarty, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President
(*Ex officio*)

Apologies: Professor John J Boland, Dean of Research (*Ex officio*)
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Amir Khan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Paul Delaney, School of English
Professor Seamus Joseph Martin, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Giuliana Adamo, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
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 Benjamin Wold, Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
Professor Virpi Timonen, School of Social Work and Social Policy



Ms Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian (in attendance *Ex officio*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, CAPSL Representative
(*Ex officio*)

In attendance:

Ms Ewa Sadowska (Trinity Teaching and Learning), Temporary Secretary (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Office of Dean of Graduate Studies (*Ex officio*)
Dr Aonghus Mc Nabola (School of Engineering) for item GS/15-16/28

GS/15-16/24 Minutes of 3rd December 2015

The minutes were approved by the committee as circulated.

GS/15-16/25 Matters Arising

Re: GS/15-16/14 Dean of Graduate Studies' Annual Report 2013/14

Following what had been agreed at the meeting in October the Dean advised that she had contacted a number of universities in Ireland to survey their thesis submission practises i.e. whether they allowed their PhD students to submit their research thesis with or without the approval and the sign off of the supervisor. The Dean reported that most Irish universities require a sign off by the supervisor and another designated academic staff member but only two universities would not accept the thesis without the two signatures being in place.

Re: GS/15-16/18 A new course proposal MSc in Applied Behaviour

Analysis:

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that the proposal had been approved by the University Council on 10 February 2016.

Re: GS/15-16/19 A new course proposal MSc in Digital Marketing Strategy:

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that the proposal had been approved by the University Council on 10 February 2016. The Dean also reminded the committee that they had approved the course in December subject to clarification about Masters with Distinction regulations on page 9 (point ix). Accordingly, she clarified that the relevant regulation (ix) should read that students who have achieved an overall unrounded aggregate mark of at least 68% for the taught modules and achieved a mark of at least 70% in modules amounting to 30 credits and at least 70% in the dissertation are eligible for the award of Masters with Distinction if they have not repeated any examinations that form part of their module results.

Action 1: The Business School DTLP Prof. Barry undertook to bring this clarification to the attention of the School with a view to it being implemented in all new Business courses approved to date in the academic year 2015/16.

Re: GS/15-16/20 A new proposal for Dissertation with Practice Module

(Film Studies):

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that the proposal had been approved by the University Council on 13 January 2016.

Re: GS/15-16/21 Postgraduate Research Students Pilot Survey



The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that the survey had been finalised and disseminated to the postgraduate research students the previous week.

Action 2: The Dean of Graduate Studies undertook to circulate the final document to the members of the committee.

GS/15-16/26 Discussion Document: non-pay budgets for postgraduate courses

The Dean of Graduate Studies welcomed Prof. Roger West (the School of Engineering DTLP) to talk to the circulated discussion document related to non-pay budgets for postgraduate taught courses. Prof West summarised the concerns and issues raised in the document regarding the current financial model for taught PG courses. In the discussion which ensued the following points were made:

- a) Using the current financial model, in certain cases, appears to discourage recruitment of additional EU and non –EU taught PG students.
- b) Additional financial clarity on the actual cost of running PG taught courses would be welcomed by members and would greatly assist in the short term and strategic planning for schools.

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that the Chief Financial Officer had been sent a copy of the document and had been invited to attend the meeting but was not available to attend until the next meeting in March. The committee welcomed this opportunity to engage in dialogue.

Action 3: Prof. Roger West undertook to add in an executive summary to the document and to incorporate additional discussion points which had been raised. It was agreed that the revised document will be re-circulated to the Chief Financial Officer and the committee members for the meeting in March.

GS/15-16/27 Liaison with Schools re Orientation Week in September 2016

The Dean of Graduate Studies welcomed Ms Katie Crowther, GSU President. The Dean underlined that the GSU had done a great job to put on an orientation programme for new postgraduate students over the last three years practically without any College support. In parallel, Schools had also been engaging in orientation activities but the Dean noted that going forward the efforts of both sides would be more effective if they were combined. The GSU President explained that the GSU had begun an internal review of Postgraduate Orientation Week 2015 and met with the various contributing departments College-wide to hear their feedback on the opportunities to further improve the event. The GSU is in a transitional period. They will continue to lead the event but in the long term the event should be an embedded practice in the College calendar possibly ran by a newly established designated “first year experience officer” who would have an overview of orientation for all students, from acceptance until the end of their first semester as is indicated in the College Strategic Plan (page 28).

The GSU President spoke of an identified need for clearer communication channels between the Faculties, Schools and Departments and invited the committee



members to provide her with their feedback on how best such communication could be achieved taking into consideration the following key factors:

- a) Information sharing at acceptance of applications (which could be enhanced by incorporating additional information into letters of acceptance issued by the Academic Registry, and the Global Office)
- b) pre-arrival information
- c) Trinity orientation
- d) School/course representation elections
- e) Postgraduate-focused opportunities College-wide to be communicated by means of postgraduate reps as focal agents.

Action 4: It was agreed that committee members would forward their feedback by email directly to the GSU President.

XX GS/15-16/28 A new MSc in Engineering strand proposal in Sustainable Energy

The Dean of Graduate Studies welcomed Prof. Aonghus Mc Nabola from the School of Engineering (director of the established MSc in Engineering proposing the new strand in Sustainable Energy) to talk to the circulated proposal taken as read.

Prof. Mc Nabola explained that a few years before the long-established Masters course in Civil Engineering was reviewed and restructured to the Masters in Engineering with three strands i.e. Environmental, Structural and Geotechnical, and Transportation. The proposed strand in Sustainable Energy was being put in place to respond to a market need for technical and scientific knowledge on sustainable energy engineering including energy efficiency, sustainable energy technologies and energy management techniques. The new strand would complement the established strands by providing more module options for all MSc and MAI students in the School. The strand syllabus would cover energy conservation and the development of alternative sustainable sources of energy.

In a short discussion which followed the course director explained that recruitment to the new strand would also target non engineers such as graduates from Physics with energy disciplines who have interest in sustainable energy. The committee approved the new strand without any changes. The Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that the strand would not be reviewed by an external assessor (as its course structure and most of its modules are shared with the established strands of the course), and would be put for approval by the University Council *via* the GSC minutes.

GS/15-16/29 Report of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) with emphasis on postgraduate courses

The item was deferred.

GS/15-16/30 AOB

There was none.

Section B for noting and approval

The committee members noted and approved *Calendar III* changes for 2016/17 from the following Schools:



B.1 School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences including a new optional module *Chinese translation in practical contexts* for MPhil in Chinese Studies;

B.2 School of Engineering;

B.3 School of Drama, Film and Music - only for TAYLOR BEQUEST IN MUSIC ("Miscellaneous research travel funds") and HOME HEWSON SCHOLARSHIP ("Postgraduate awards and travel funds").

XX B.4 Noted and approved was also a new stand-alone specialist Trinity Children's Research Centre module in *Child and Life-course Research* for internal College-wide delivery to registered PhD students.

The module will be coordinated by Assistant Professor Dr Lorraine Swords, and delivered through the Children's Research Centre (Director: Professor Trevor Spratt) but the module coordinator will report to the Postgraduate Studies Committees in Social Work & Social Policy and Psychology and the respective Directors of Postgraduate Research and Heads of Schools. The Children's Research Centre is a joint initiative of the School of Psychology and the School of Social Work and Social Policy (SWSP). The module was approved on the 8th January 2016 by the SWSP Management Committee and on the 10th January 2016 by the Head of School of Psychology.

This stand-alone module aims to introduce students to cutting edge research in a field of study characterised by rapid development and inter-disciplinarity between biological, psychological and social sciences and to enhance students' capacities to conduct high-quality empirical research on the lived experiences of children via grounding in key empirical, theoretical and methodological issues. The module will invite students to critically reflect upon, and share, their own approaches to research.

The module will be internal to Trinity-registered PhD student with minimum 5 and maximum 15 places to be reserved on a 'first come' basis by emailing the module co-ordinator. The module will commence in Michaelmas Term 2016 and will last one term. It will take place at the Seminar Room at the Children's Research Centre, Foster Place. It will comprise six lectures. All teaching staff are internal to Trinity and members of the Children's Research Forum. Teaching contributors will volunteer to deliver just one lecture/seminar (maximum three hours' duration) per module on a particular area of research expertise. The contributors responsible for delivering the first module are Prof. Trevor Spratt (Social Studies), Dr Elizabeth Nixon (Psychology), Prof. James Williams (Economic and Social Research Institute), Prof. Richard Layte (Sociology), Prof. Louise Gallagher (Medicine – Psychiatry) and Dr Lorraine Swords (Psychology).

The module will have 5 ETCS equalling 100 student effort hours consisting of six two-hour Lectures/Seminars (12 hours of direct student contact), two one-hour tutorials (2 hours of direct student contact) and 86 student workload hours, in terms



of ECTS, consists of lecture/seminar preparatory reading (approximately 4 hours per lecture/seminar), preparation for individual tutorial (approximately one hour per tutorial) independent study with respect to set tasks (approximately 5 hours per lecture/seminar), and completion of the module assignment (approximately 30 hours). Students' performance on the module will be evaluated on the basis of good attendance (80% overall) and a successful pass on the assigned assessment (an essay of approximately 2,500-3,000 words in length. Students can only miss one lecture/seminar) along with submission of, and a 'pass' grade for, the module assignment). Students are required to achieve a 50% mark in order to pass the assessment. Students who complete the module will obtain a Centre-issued *Certificate of Attendance and Completion* with a module transcript. This stand-alone module does not require a designated online recruitment point to be set up by the Academic Registry.

Section C for noting

The committee noted the below:

C1. Minutes of the Royal Irish Academy of Music Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM ACDC) of 4 November 2015

C2. Draft Minutes of the Associated Colleges Degrees Committee (ACDC) of 18 November 2015

There being no other business, the meeting ended.

Prof. Aideen Long

Date: 18 February 2016