



GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the online meeting held via Zoom at
10am on Thursday 24 February 2022

XX = Council relevance

Present (Ex officio):

Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*)

Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, Dean of Research

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Rachel Mary Mc Loughlin, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor John Boland, School of Chemistry

Professor Owen Conlan, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Ioannis Polyzois, School of Dental Science

Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education

Professor Sarah McCormack, School of Engineering

Professor Bernice Murphy, School of English

Professor Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics and Microbiology

Professor Isabella Jackson, School of Histories & Humanities

Professor James Hadley, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies

Professor Blanaid Clarke, School of Law

Professor Kathleen McTiernan, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences

Professor Manuela Kulaxizi, School of Mathematics

Professor Cian O'Callaghan, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Mary Hughes, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Carlos Medina Martin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Hongzhou Zhang, School of Physics

Professor Ladislav Timulak, School of Psychology

Professor Gillian Wylie, School of Religion

Professor Agustín Bénétrix, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy

Professor Paula Mayock, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director, Tangent

Ms Gisèle Scanlon, Graduate Students' Union President

Ms Abhiswetta Bhattacharjee, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President

In attendance for all items:

Ms Fedelma McNamara, Director of Internationalisation, TCD Global

Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services Representative

Ms Leona Coady, Programme Director, Postgraduate Renewal Programme

Ms Ewa Adach, Administrative Officer, Graduate Education – Zoom access support

Ms Laoise Quinn (Academic Affairs, TT&L): Secretary to the Committee

Ms Ewa Sadowska Administrative Officer (Academic Affairs, TT&L)

Dr Rhiannon Carey Bates (Academic Affairs, TT&L)

Apologies

Professor Frank Barry, Trinity Business School

Professor Melissa Sihra, School of Creative Arts

Professor Lina Zgaga, School of Medicine



Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, Head of Trinity Teaching and Learning, (TT&L)
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services
Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor's Office
Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education, TT&L
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience

In attendance for individual items:

Prof. Niall Pender and Prof. Marie McCarthy, School of Medicine, for item GS/21-22/069

Ms Jennifer Pepper, Director of the Academic Registry, for item GS/21-22/071

Dr Rachel Hoare, Director of Trinity Inclusive Curriculum (Trinity-INC), for item GS/21-22/072

Prof. Denis Barry, School of Medicine, for item GS/21-22/073

The Dean welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies. She thanked Laoise Quinn for her work to date as Secretary to GSC, noting that she was now moving to a new role outside of Trinity Teaching and Learning. She also acknowledged the very sad events of the preceding evening on campus and extended her sympathy to all colleagues and students affected by those events.

XX GS/21-22/067 Minutes of GSC of 24 January 2022

The minutes were approved as circulated.

XX GS/21-22/068 Matters arising

The Dean advised members that all actions from the previous meeting had been attended to. Actions with more specific updates provided by the Dean were referred to below.

GS/21-22/006(i) Postgraduate Research Student workload: The Dean advised that a Research Assistant had been recruited to aid analysis of data and construction of a draft report. A letter from the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science was received seeking reassurance in relation to payment of students for teaching activities undertaken. It is clear that the topic is on a number of agendas and is one that needs to be addressed urgently. The Dean noted that support from Schools in providing data was much appreciated.

GS/21-22/027(i) Postgraduate Open Evening: The Dean advised members that the Director of Marketing would attend the March GSC to report on the Postgraduate Open Evening, and a full discussion of same would take place at that point. Members' initial feedback was positive. It was felt that this was a more productive event than the previous year. Only one representative per School had been permitted to be present at the 2022 Open Evening. However, members noted a preference for more Course Director representation to answer the many course-specific questions. It was also noted that the majority of attendees were based in Ireland. It was suggested that the open evening should complement other recruiting methods, rather than be the sole focus.

GS/21-22/029(i) Research Supervision Award (discussed under AOB)

GS/21-22/041 Working Group on Integrity in an Academic Institution: The Dean advised that the Terms of Reference had been approved by Council and that membership of the group was being finalised. She thanked those who had already indicated their willingness to help.

GS/21-22/055 MPhil Applied Intercultural Communications: The Dean noted that the course was



approved by Council

GS/21-22/056 MSc Global Mental Health: The Dean noted that the course was approved by Council. She further noted that due to increased workload, there had been a change to the format of Council meetings whereby items that are brought to Council via other committees are not discussed in as much depth as done previously. Therefore, she advised members that there was an increased responsibility on GSC to rigorously analyse information brought to GSC for recommendation to Council.

GS/21-22/057 (i) and (ii) External Examiner Process: The Dean informed GSC of her meeting with the Quality Officer and the Deputy Director of HR to address both actions. She noted that a complete update would be brought to the March GSC meeting and gave a summary of the current situation. HR confirmed that tax is payable only on income generated while physically in the jurisdiction of the State. A brief proposal will be developed for circulation with the GSC and USC for possible models of distribution of workload related to PhD and taught programmes. Schools will be asked to inform HR which model applies to their programmes to ensure the appropriate tax liability is applied to external examiner payments. The Deputy Director of HR will meet with School Managers to clarify processes and responsibilities in relation to processing of payment.

GS/21-22/060 Online viva voce examination: The Dean informed members that Council had approved the guidelines submitted by GSC and she thanked members for their contribution.

GS/21-22/061 Research supervision award: The Dean advised members that the award was approved in principle by Council with minor amendments as circulated to GSC. She advised that details of the process were being finalised as it was hoped to launch the award in March 2022.

GS/21-22/062 Hard copy of thesis: The Dean informed members that this item had not been brought to Council following January GSC as further consultation is necessary to ensure that there are no process challenges. She reiterated that existing Calendar regulations ensure that any requirement to submit hard copy thesis would only be from September 2022.

GS/21-22/063 PG Renewal Update: (discussed as agenda item)

GS/21-22/064 COVID-19: The Dean informed members that regular meetings of COLSAG and TLC had been adjourned in light of the rapidly changing public health advice.

GS/21-22/065 Unconditional/Conditional Offer: The Dean advised that the matter was resolved in consultation with Ronan Hodson, Academic Registry, who is now the key point of contact for DTLPs in relation to questions on postgraduate admissions.

XX GS/21-22/069 Course Proposal: MSc in Applied Clinical Neuropsychology

The Dean welcomed Profs Niall Pender and Marie McCarthy, School of Medicine, to the meeting and introduced their proposal to members. The Level 9 course comprises MSc (90ECTS) and PgDip (60 ECTS) and is offered as a one-year full-time course, with a target start date of September 2022 and an expected intake of 5-30 students. Although it has the potential to broaden to other groups, the initial target audience is students with an undergraduate qualification in psychology who wish to develop their knowledge of brain-behaviour relationships, including how those relationships are represented and how they change across a range of different neurological disorders. Course delivery



will include traditional face-to-face lectures, video case presentations, workshops, webinars, group tutorials and self-directed study time, and an additional optional opportunity for 'clinical shadowing' in small groups availing of the clinical reach of lecturers. Research will be embedded within existing research activities of the academic unit, but with an option for students to engage in other research opportunities.

This is a new course, with new modules built on existing activities, with innovative attention to the clinical application of the course content. The course aligns with the strategic plans of both Trinity and School of Medicine and has support from the School of Psychology and the Dean of Health Sciences. The Dean thanked Prof. Niall Pender and Prof. Marie McCarthy as well as Ms Ewa Sadowska who had worked with them on the proposal.

Decision GS/21-22/069: GSC recommended the course proposal for MSc in Applied Clinical Neuropsychology with an exit and PgDip, from the School of Medicine, to Council.

XX GS/21-22/070 Postgraduate Course Proposals: new online notification form

The Dean referred members to a memorandum from Linda Darbey, Asst. Academic Secretary (Academic Affairs) informing members of an expression of interest form for proposed postgraduate courses intended for GSC consideration in 2022/23. She advised that prospective Course Directors submit an expression of interest for course proposals via https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=jb6V1Qaz9EWAZJ5bgvIK-D_zfo9H7pHgsrYzCfWBQNUNEUxRUdESEdDTDE0QVICUVNIVU5JQVY4Ny4u by 17 June 2022. This new system will facilitate the planning and development of new course proposals and the timely submission of course proposals for consideration by the relevant GSC meeting in 2022/23.

XX GS/21-22/071 Academic Registry Annual Report 2020/21

The Dean welcomed Ms Jennifer Pepper, Director of Academic Registry, to the meeting. Two papers had been circulated to members in advance; the Academic Registry Annual Report 2020/21 and a slide deck outlining the Director of Academic Registry's presentation to GSC.

The report details a time when Ireland had been in full lockdown. At the start of term in September 2020, there was no walk-in service available for students, which resulted in a 56% increase in number of emails and a 52% increase in telephone calls received. A web-chat service was also introduced to aid with response to student queries.

There were 37,000 applications and Student Finance managed €175 million in tuition billing and payments. The largest increase in activity was in Student Cases, with a total of 7209 cases processed, representing over 60% increase. Most cases were related to COVID-linked deferrals, extensions and assessment changes. All examination sittings were online for the academic year and graduation ceremonies were a mix of online ceremonies, with some in-person ceremonies in August 2021.

A number of Academic Registry initiatives were outlined, including the provision of a fully operational remote team. Assessment remained online for 2020/21 and critical activity implemented in May 2020 was reviewed and improved. The service delivery model was adapted as a result of the ongoing restrictions and was enhanced to support submission of documentation online. Student-



friendly payment options with three payment instalments was retained and a second year of COVID-related changes to BAU processes in CAO, system upgrades and strategic project initiatives were managed.

Questions from members followed the presentation and the Director of Academic Registry noted that any specific questions could be emailed directly to her and she would research and respond to such individual queries. The Dean thanked the Director of Academic Registry for her update.

GS/21-22/072 Trinity Inclusivity Curriculum Project (Trinity INC)

The Dean welcomed Prof. Rachel Hoare, Director of Trinity Inclusivity Curriculum (Trinity INC) project, to the meeting to speak about the project, which has three aims – to create an accessible curriculum which supports the engagement, representation and action of all students, including those from diverse worldviews, cultures, and identities, and with different learning styles and abilities; to embed the principles of inclusion in all aspects of the academic cycle, across all courses, modules and programmes at Trinity; and to establish Trinity as a place of belonging and respect for diversity, where all our students feel supported in achieving their learning goals.

Activities across the four pillars of project initiatives (academic, student, institutional and infrastructure) were outlined. It was noted that there were 18 Champions from 15 Schools throughout Trinity; but with only two from Faculty of STEM (School of Natural Sciences and School of Computer Science and Statistics), more were welcome. The Champions present and represent at relevant meetings, e.g. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teaching and Learning meetings, attend monthly Trinity-INC meetings and attend professional learning, incl. Inclusivity Teaching & Learning Module.

The Director of Trinity-INC outlined three core principles for the design of learning experiences and to reduce barriers in the T&L context; multiple means of engagement; multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression.

She noted that an inclusive curriculum in Trinity can only be achieved with the involvement of students from communities who often face the most barriers to their learning. Therefore, there was an aim to raise awareness of experiences of inclusion and exclusion within curricula at Trinity, and to inform the direction of Trinity-INC project, including training for teaching and learning staff.

During its pilot year (2020/21), the project held consultations with over fifty key stakeholders across staff and student groups. Trinity-INC Advisory Board was established along with recruitment of School Champions (pilot) and development and delivery of Inclusivity Professional Development training module (pilot) and of the Summer Student Partner Programme. Accompanying Trinity-INC webpages were also created: [Inclusive Curriculum - Equality - Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](https://www.tcd.ie/inclusive-curriculum-equality)

The current 2021/22 academic year is focussing on further recruitment of School Champions, further training opportunities for School Champions and staff in Trinity, workshops and collaboration with the Student Partner Committee, and meetings with the Advisory Board. Monthly public talk series commenced on 4 February 2022 and focus is on an increased communication and social media presence including a Trinity Week 'Inclusive Trinity' event, culminating in the embedding of inclusive curriculum principles into Trinity policies.



There was much interest in the project from members, who asked the Director of Trinity-INC to elaborate on various aspects of the project.

Action GS/21-22/072(i): The Trinity-INC project is actively recruiting postgraduate student partners (a paid role) and members who identify potential postgraduate student partners should contact the Director of Trinity-INC.

Action GS/21-22/072(ii): Members from Schools not represented by Trinity-INC School Champions were encouraged to inform their colleagues of the vacancies and were invited to contact the Director of Trinity-INC to nominate a School Champion.

The Dean thanked the Director of Trinity-INC for her presentation on a stimulating and interesting project which, she noted, was timely given that the Postgraduate Renewal Project had recently begun.

GS/21-22/073 SATLE20 Project: 'Enhancing Blended Learning in Anatomy Education'

The Dean noted that the January meeting had seen two presentations on initiatives funded by SATLE20 to enhance teaching and learning; and that presentations from other SATLE20 projects would be given at upcoming GSC meetings.

The Dean welcomed Project Lead, Prof. Denis Barry, Head of Discipline, Discipline of Anatomy, School of Medicine to the meeting to share his SATLE20 project, 'Enhancing Blended Learning in Anatomy Education'. The project goal is to enhance the Department of Anatomy's blended offerings through the digitisation of historic and radiographic teaching resources. These will complement existing teaching practices, including cadaveric practical labs and didactic lectures.

The project has two deliverables: labelled radiographic imagery, both typical and pathological anatomy; and a digitised anatomical teaching specimen often accompanied by case histories. The deliverables aim to raise the standard of anatomy education, to better prepare students for radiological interpretation in clinical practice, to generate awareness of the legacy of anatomy teaching in order to increase appreciation of contemporary donor-led anatomy teaching, and to improve student-lecturer relations and reduce transactional distance.

Prof. Barry highlighted the successes of the project to date. A research assistant had been appointed and a licence for tool development acquired and training completed. Thorax, Abdomen and Pelvis (TAP) historic teaching materials were identified, digitised and incorporated into the 'Historical Anatomy Tool'. TAP radiographs were acquired and incorporated into the 'Interactive Cross Sectional Anatomy Tool'. Head and Neck historic teaching materials have been identified and digitisation and incorporation into the tool is underway. An oral and poster presentation was presented at the National Forum Valuing Ireland's Teaching and Learning Week, 8-12 November 2021.

The Project Lead concluded by noting that the next steps included getting feedback from student stakeholders and integrating the platforms with Blackboard; and noted the impact of the project: it aligns with existing curricular elements; and increases the capacity for self-directed learning while alleviating immediate overreliance on online search engines and resulting in a reduction in transactional distance.

The project was well-received from members and the Dean thanked Prof. Barry for his presentation, noting that he was happy to be contacted directly if there were any further questions or queries.



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GS/21-22/074 Postgraduate Renewal update

The Director of Postgraduate Renewal Project advised members that the online survey for staff and students had closed. She reported that micro-surveys of postgraduate students had taken place whereby respondents received a free cup of coffee. In this poll, 70% of postgraduate research students surveyed indicated a preference for in-person *viva voce* examinations and 60% preferred the requirement to submit a hard copy of theses to be optional, with 20% preferring it to be optional and 20% in favour of a mandatory hard copy submission. Other student engagement activities took place off campus in Tallaght University Hospital and a similar event is planned for students on the St James' Hospital campus.

The Director of Postgraduate Renewal Project advised members that work package activity was also underway, with meetings with Chairs and Leads taking place. Work package membership was being finalised, ensuring cross-faculty representation and staff representation and the approach of the project would be planned in February and March 2022. It was anticipated that results of the survey analysis would be brought to the March GSC, as part of the ambition of formulating a draft plan for consideration by Council in May 2022.

The Dean noted the scale and scope of the data now available for analysis and proposed a dedicated meeting of GSC members, with Director members especially requested to join, in order to discuss findings from this initial consultation phase and possible priorities for attention. She noted a hope that the meeting could be in-person and suggested a provisional date of 28 March at 4pm. The Dean suggested the possibility of two meetings taking place so all members would have an opportunity to attend and contribute.

A short discussion followed the presentation and while the 'coffee cart survey' was praised as an innovative manner of receiving student feedback, it was suggested that perhaps a deeper discussion with students could clarify the context of the questions posted and that focus groups may give a more informed student response. The Dean agreed that informed decisions were being sought and noted that this was one of many ways of engaging with students.

Responding to a query about a lack of questions on staff experience within the survey, the Dean noted that the scope of any survey must be limited in order to ensure response rates that are reliable. Given the wide range of areas of potential interest, the number of survey questions had been greatly reduced. The Dean also noted that the survey represented an initial consultation process and that other methods of consultation on a wide range of issues that were not suitable for exploration through the survey will be held over the coming months. She also advised that the winners of the survey would be announced in the coming days.

Decision GS/21-22/074: GSC agreed that a special in-person (if possible) meeting of GSC would take place on 28 March, 4pm, where the Postgraduate Renewal Project would be discussed as a single item agenda.

Action GS/21-22/074: Graduate Studies Office will issue GSC members with an invitation to attend a special in-person (if possible) meeting of GSC, 28 March 2022, 4pm.

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GS/21-22/075 Calendar III update



The Dean referred members to a circulated memorandum detailing a guide to the revised process for submission and approval of Calendar changes for 2022/23 and included a timeline for the stages within the process. The Dean reminded members that once Calendar regulations are published, they cannot be changed and therefore advised members to ensure existing entries are both accurate and complete. It was also noted that any revisions or new additions must be approved through the School Executive Committee prior to submission to the Graduate Studies Office.

It was suggested by a member that perhaps in the following academic year, this reminder to Schools could be issued at an earlier date as otherwise there may be very little time between the issue of the memorandum and School Executive Committee meetings.

XX GS/21-22/076 Any Other Business

(i) Institutional Review

The Dean reminded members that the Institutional Review will take place 7-11 March 2022. She thanked all involved in the participation and preparation of materials to date as well as those who would be present in upcoming meetings.

(ii) Research Supervision Award

The Dean reported that Council welcomed the introduction of the Research Supervision Award. The Dean confirmed that, as suggested by the GSC, two awards (one for early career supervisors) will be available within each Faculty. She noted that there had been much engaged discussion at Council resulting in amended guidelines with suggested changes being circulated to GSC members for approval.

Decision GS/21-22/076: GSC recommended the amended guidelines on the Research Supervision Award to Council.

(iii) LERU Summer School Application

The Dean reminded members that high quality applications were being accepted from postgraduate research students in their final years of study to represent Trinity at LERU Summer School, 4-8 July, Utrecht University. The closing date for submission of applications has been extended to Monday 28 February.

XX Section B for noting and approval

XX GS/21-22/077 HCI Pillar 3 Micro-credentials for approval

A memorandum from Prof. Owen Conlan, Chair of the USC/GSC Sub-committee on Micro-credentials requested GSC consideration of three micro-credentials from the School of Nursing and Midwifery that had been recommended for approval by the sub-committee at their meeting of 7 February 2022 as follows: 'Advancing health and assessment practice for healthcare practitioners', 'Application of Simulation Practice in Healthcare' and 'Enacting Human Rights in the Lives of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities'.



Decision GS/21-22/077: GSC endorsed the recommendation of the USC/GSC Sub-committee on HCI Pillar 3 Micro-credentials for Council to approve the following three micro-credentials from School of Nursing and Midwifery: 'Advancing health and assessment practice for healthcare practitioners', 'Application of Simulation Practice in Healthcare' and 'Enacting Human Rights in the Lives of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities'.

XX GS/21-22/078 PgCert in Orofacial Pain

A memorandum from Prof. Michael O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science requested two new entry points in January and June, and suspension of the September entry point, to recruit annually, commencing in 2022, for Postgraduate Certificate in Orofacial Pain (DPCDE-OPAI-1P01). The Dean confirmed that this request had been submitted following liaison with Academic Affairs and the Academic Registry and was written with the approval of the Academic Registry. A GSC member noted the importance of ensuring that the new recruitment dates also align with functionality within the VLE, to ensure smooth processing of assessments.

Decision GS/21-22/078: GSC recommended for Council's approval the request from the School of Dental Science for two new entry points in January and June, and suspension of the September entry point, to recruit annually, commencing in 2022, for Postgraduate Certificate in Orofacial Pain (DPCDE-OPAI-1P01).

XX GS/21-22/079 Charm-EU Masters in Global Challenges for Sustainability

A memorandum from Prof. Catherine Comiskey, CHARM Academic Director, requested that the delivery details for the CHARM-EU Masters in Global Challenges for Sustainability programme (PTNS-GCFS-1P) are changed from 'part-time' to 'full-time'.

Decision GS/21-22/079: GSC recommended for Council's approval the requested change in delivery details for the CHARM-EU Masters in Global Challenges for Sustainability programme (PTNS-GCFS-1P) from 'part-time' to 'full-time'.

XX Section C for noting

XX GS/21-22/080 Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) minutes of 10 November 2021

The minutes of 10 November of Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) Associated Colleges Degrees Committee were circulated to members.

GS/21-22/081 The Research Factor: Three Minute Thesis Competition

A memorandum from the Postgraduate Experience Working Group of Student Life Committee advised members to encourage postgraduate research students to participate in Trinity's inaugural '3 Minute Thesis Competition', to take place in March. The memorandum noted the closing date was 5pm, 25 February 2022.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12pm.