Present (Ex officio):
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair)

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Rachel Mary Mc Loughlin, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Frank Barry, Trinity Business School
Professor John Boland, School of Chemistry
Professor Owen Conlan, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Melissa Sihra, School of Creative Arts
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 Lina Zgaga, School of Medicine
Professor Cian O’Callaghan, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Mary Hughes, School of Nursing and Midwifery
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 Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, Head of Trinity Teaching and Learning, (TT&L)
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services
Ms Fedelma McNamara, Director of Internationalisation, TCD Global
Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor’s Office
Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services Representative
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience
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)
Apologies
Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, Dean of Research
Professor Carlos Medina Martin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Hongzhou Zhang, School of Physics
Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education, TT&L

In attendance for individual items:
Dr Yairen Jerez Columbié and Dr Théophile Munyangeyo, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, for item GS/21-22/055
Dr Tania Bosqui and Dr Frédérique Vallieres, School of Psychology, for item GS/21-22/056
Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer, for item GS/21-22/057
Prof. Cuisle Forde and Ms Annie O’Brien, School of Medicine, for item GS/21-22/058
Dr Pauline Rooney, Academic Practice, for item GS/21-22/059

The Dean welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies. She especially welcomed Prof. Agustín Bénétrix, who is taking over the role of Director for School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, while Prof. Tara Mitchell is on leave. The Dean also welcomed Prof. Melissa Sihra, who is taking over the role of Director for School of Creative Arts, while Prof. Sarah Jane Scaife is on leave.

GS/21-22/053 Minutes of GSC of 2 December 2021
The minutes were approved as circulated.

GS/21-22/054 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.

Re GS/21-22/006(i): The Dean thanked Profs McTiernan, McCormack, Murphy and Zhang, along with Ewa Adach, Graduate Studies Office, Alexandra Corey, Graduate Students’ Union and Catherine Finnegan, School Manager, School of Law, for their work in building a consultative process that is now underway. It is hoped the report will be brought to the GSC by April. The Dean further thanked all Directors and School Managers who assisted by gathering data, noting that submissions were being accepted until Monday 21 January 2022. She advised that many examples of good practice were identified and will be shared.

Re GS/21-22/027(iv): The Dean reminded members that Postgraduate Open Day would take place on 17 February 2022, 5-7pm, and any changes to slides or videos should be shared with Ms Beibhinn Coman, Director of Marketing, TCD Global by 2 February 2022.

Re GS/21-22/029(i): The Dean thanked members for their feedback, which was included in revised versions. She noted that the research supervision award would be discussed as an agenda item.

Re GS/21-22/030(i): The Dean thanked Prof Hadley for representing GSC on the review panel for Postgraduate Teaching Awards.

Re GS/21-22/031(iii): The Dean advised that members’ feedback had been incorporated in the proposed revised online viva voce guidelines and would be further discussed as an agenda item.

Re GS/21-22/033(i): The Dean thanked members for informing her of their School’s situation regarding postgraduate representative. The Dean advised members that she had raised members’
concern at Council and that the Provost had expressed her concern at the lack of the postgraduate student voice on important School committees for a long period of time. The information given by the Dean to the Provost was that, as of 16 December, of the 18 Schools that replied to the Dean’s email query, 12 Schools had received no notification, 4 Schools had notification of some postgraduate representatives and 2 Schools had carried out their own internal process to identify representatives and had notified the Graduate Students’ Union of same.

Re GS/21-22/040: The Dean informed members that Council approved the proposal for the expansion of Postgraduate Diploma in Engineering for Climate Action to incorporate a part-time option.

Re GS/21-22/041: The Dean notified members that preliminary discussions had begun on a Working Group on Integrity in an Academic Institution, jointly chaired by the Dean of Research, the Senior Lecturer and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean thanked Prof Clarke who agreed to join the working group on behalf of the GSC. She noted that membership was still evolving and the Terms of Reference were yet to be submitted to Council. The Dean further noted that other volunteers would be welcome as it was anticipated that a number of workstreams would arise from the working group.

Re GS/21-22/044 (i) and (ii): The Dean noted that both actions were ongoing.

Re GS/21-22/045: The Dean advised that Catherine Allen, Graduate Studies Office, would contact members to arrange meetings in relation to ISSE feedback. The Dean suggested that these group meetings (with 4 Directors) would focus on Directors’ sharing plans for useful actions in light of issues identified within the feedback.

Re GS/21-22/046: The Dean noted that the action on LERU Summer School was ongoing.

Re GS/21-22/047: The Dean confirmed that Postgraduate Renewal Terms of Reference and governance were approved by Council and noted that Postgraduate Renewal remains as a standing item on the GSC agenda.

Re GS/21-22/048: The Dean confirmed that the administrative pressures related to changes to examination deferral procedures was raised with COLSAG. She noted that there is recognition and ambition at COLSAG to ensure focus is maintained on ‘living with’ rather than ‘responding to’ COVID-19.

Re GS/21-22/049: The Dean reminded members that feedback on Graduate Studies FAQs https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/faq/ could still be submitted.

Re GS/21-22/049(i): The Dean noted that desk space for postgraduate research students remained an ongoing focus of discussion.

GS/21-22/055 Course Proposal: MPhil-PgDip-PgCert in Applied Intercultural Communications

The Dean welcomed Dr Yairen Jerez Columbié and Dr Théophile Munyaneyo, School of Languages Literatures and Cultures, to the meeting and introduced their proposal to members. The Level 9 course comprises MPhil (90ECTS), PgDip (60 ECTS) and PgCert (30 ECTS) and is funded under the HCI Pillar 3, with a target start date of September 2022 (minimum quota of 4 students). There are a
number of proposed entry routes and exit options, including the Traditional full-time MPhil, with an option of exit with PGDip, the Traditional part-time MPhil, completed over 2 years (60+30 ECTS) and a Framework option with attainment options of PgCert, PgDip or MPhil, over a 3-year cycle (i.e. taking 30 ECTS each cycle). Run within the Centre for Intercultural Communications, this course aligns with the Centre’s goals to provide education for business and industry, to promote ethical awareness of environmental and human rights issues and to support lifelong upskilling and reskilling. The key focus of the course is intercultural competence and the theories, methods and perspectives of intercultural communication in a global context. The target market is both individuals and organisations seeking to advance their success and engagement in intercultural activities and it supports inclusive, equitable and responsible collaborations between academia, society and industry.

The unique selling point of this course compared to competitor programmes is the applied emphasis, in addition to the broad emphasis on intercultural communications rather than languages or linguistics. Case study work is planned on Francophone Africa, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, which are areas of growth in economic, political and cultural relations with Ireland. With collaboration from industry (drawing in part from the strength of the Board of the Centre), it is anticipated that this course would have broad appeal, ranging from industry to social and professional environments. Graduates would be prepared for culturally diverse careers, including multinational contexts, international relations, global engagement, diplomacy, personnel training, leadership, multilingual education and language policy.

Although the course proposal was circulated to all members, the Dean had asked the Director of the School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences and the Director of Trinity Business School to look at this proposal in particular detail. The Director of the School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences was unable to attend this part of the meeting but had contacted the Dean to note that she strongly supported the proposal and had no particular issues to raise.

The Director of Trinity Business School noted that a course within his School, ‘Cross Cultural Management’, corresponded closely to modules within the proposed course; however there were no concerns in terms of overlap of intellectual content. The Dean suggested that there might be synergies and collaborations that could be explored in the future, with marketing crossover or spill-over benefits to both.

The Dean thanked Dr Yairen Jerez Columbié and Dr Théophile Munyaneyo and Ms. Ewa Sadowska who had worked with them on the proposal.

**Decision GS/21-22/055**: GSC recommended the course proposal for MPhil, with PGDip and PgCert in Applied Intercultural Communications, from the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, to Council.

**XX GS/21-22/056 Course Proposal: MSc in Global Mental Health**

The Dean welcomed Dr Tania Bosqui and Dr Frédérique Vallieres, School of Psychology, to the meeting and introduced their course proposal, in collaboration with the School of Medicine (Trinity Centre for Global Health) to members. The Level 9 course comprises a full-time or part-time MSc (90 ECTS) or full-time PgDip (60 ECTS), with 4xSECTS (20ECTS) modules with MSc in Global Health, an
additional 20ECTS of new modules exclusive to students in the MSc in Global Mental Health, and 20ECTS shared with wider cohorts. All taught modules are mandatory and must be completed in Year 1.

The course provides an in-depth critical exploration of global mental health, including mental health and mental health difficulties, the social and cultural context, accessibility and evidence base for interventions, with particular attention to mental health systems in humanitarian and emergency settings. A unique offering in Ireland, this proposed course is aligned to the strategic plans of both Schools and with that of the University. The target market is those involved in mental health research, programme development, project management and policy formation, and admissions criteria are an Honours Bachelor in health-related and or psychology-cognate area, along with international experience and a demonstrated interest in global mental health. Existing partnerships can be exploited when marketing the course as well as a large cohort of graduates from a diverse range of psychology courses.

**Decision GS/21-22/056:** GSC recommended the course proposal for MSc in Global Mental Health, from the School of Psychology, to Council.

**XX GS/21-22/057 External Examiner Process**

The Dean welcomed Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer, to the meeting. Two papers had been circulated to members in advance, detailing a recent requirement from Revenue that payment for any external examiner function fulfilled within the Republic of Ireland could only be issued to a payee with a valid PPS number. She advised that, for data protection reasons, examiners would need to apply for the PPS number themselves; Trinity could not do so on their behalf. However, information would be made available on the Quality Office’s webpage related to external examiners [https://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/quality/quality-assurance/examiners.php](https://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/quality/quality-assurance/examiners.php) It was noted that this new regulation would not affect external examiners who fulfil their function remotely, i.e. outside the jurisdiction of the State.

While acknowledging that this was a government-imposed regulation, members voiced concerns that the new legislation would limit the range of potential external examiners as many may not wish to undertake the process of applying for an Irish PPS number for what is quite often done as a favour to the School. It was suggested that the application process should be made as simple as possible for external examiners.

There were a number of questions for the Quality Officer. One query was whether a subject specialist who wished to have their examiner’s fee waived, but expenses paid, would still need a PPS number. The Quality Officer advised that members could contact HR Payroll where queries on exceptional circumstances would be dealt with on case-by-case basis.

There were also a number of queries on the general circumstances surrounding this requirement. It was queried if it was indeed the case that only if they physically travel to Ireland that external examiners would need a PPS number. It was further queried whether there would be a requirement for a work permit for those resident outside the EU.

It was suggested that if the requirement was only based on the amount of time external examiners
spent working when in Ireland, the view could be taken that, for many external examiners, this tax would be based on only a small amount of their earnings, as much of their work is done in advance of arriving in Ireland.

It was also queried whether this requirement would need to be applied immediately for external examiners due to come to Ireland in upcoming months.

The Dean suggested that clarity on the detail of the requirement would be necessary as questions raised at this meeting had led to additional points needing clarification. She further suggested that in addition to the Quality Officer circulating the advice from the Revenue, it would be important that a College-wide communication be circulated so that Schools have a clear understanding on how the advice should be interpreted.

The Dean advised that this item be revisited at a later GSC meeting when there was more certainty on the issue and that members could contact the Quality Officer and/or the Graduate Studies Office with any further queries or comments.

**Action GS/21-22/057(i):** The Quality Officer will circulate the details on the requirement from Revenue regarding external examiners from outside Ireland requiring a PPS number.

**Action GS/21-22/057(ii):** Following further investigation into the Revenue requirement regarding external examiners from outside Ireland requiring a PPS number, the Quality Officer will return to GSC with responses to the queries raised and with the aim to circulate a College-wide communication on the matter.

**GS/21-22/058 SATLE20 project: ‘DEPTH Digitally Enhanced Practice Teaching in Health science’**

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

The Dean welcomed Prof. Cuisle Forde and Ms Annie O’Brien, School of Medicine, to the meeting to speak about their project, DEPTH (Digitally Enhanced Practical Teaching in Health science) which examined opportunities and barriers, as well as and student, academic, clinical professional and patient perspectives on digitally enhanced practical teaching.

The project goal is to examine the feasibility and efficacy of digitally enhanced practical teaching and, informed by the research results, to develop an open educational resource. The resource would be designed both for teachers and learners to include case studies, literature review and results of studies undertaken as part of the project. It would also include academic papers (published open access) and publicly available reports on results of the study.

A number of themes arose in the initial analysis: unrealistic expectation of time, movement from passive learning to active learning, ‘short and snappy’ lectures are easier to engage with, there is greater engagement with practical classes following online learning, and future practical skill learning should be blended.

The presenters advised that it is hoped to launch the online resource by the end of May 2022. The Dean thanked Dr Forde and Ms O’Brien for their presentation and congratulated them on their achievement, noting that there would be much interest in the resource and that there could be
scope to expand such a resource beyond health sciences.


The Dean welcomed Dr Pauline Rooney, Academic Practice, to the meeting to speak about her SATLE20 project, ‘Digital by Design: Building Capacity for Digital Education’, which aimed to build on what has been learned from pandemic experiences of digital learning to mainstream evidence-based digital education practices. Project deliverables included a comprehensive review and needs analysis to support the development of Trinity's Digital Learning Strategy and the creation of an institutional professional development framework for digital education. Targeted professional development for teaching staff and graduate teaching assistants/demonstrators would also be developed, within a flexible modular architecture that offers potential for delivery as a suite of micro-credentials (for credit or not-for-credit).

Dr Rooney noted that progress to date included research to inform the comprehensive review and needs analysis, scaffolding of communities of practice focused on digital teaching, learning and assessment strategies, the development of a ‘Digital by Design’ online hub and the facilitation of seminars funded by the National Forum.

Next steps included development of a professional development framework for digital learning at Trinity, development of targeted professional development to include ‘Innovating and Leading Digital Teaching and Learning’, a non-accredited course for teaching staff, and ‘Supporting Teaching & Learning in a Digital Context’, a credited course for graduate teaching assistants.

Dean thanked Dr Rooney and Academic Practice for their invaluable input in helping Trinity staff navigate the switch to digital demands for teaching and learning and she welcomed this next stage whereby teachers’ and learners’ experience was being used both to maintain excellence and to foster additional skills.

Other members echoed the Dean in thanking Academic Practice. The importance of support for physical infrastructure associated with online and blended teaching was raised. Dr Rooney noted that IT Services is responsible for infrastructure, and it was agreed that the introduction of a digital learning strategy with a holistic view of how staff are supported in digital teaching, linking the work of both Academic Practice and IT Services will be very welcome.

Although outside the scope of this project, the cost challenge of introducing digital teaching was raised as an issue for Schools. It was noted that even blended programmes which are not fully online, can experience very significant associated costs.

The Dean agreed that costs associated with digital teaching was a live issue for many Schools and had been for some time. She emphasised the need to find a way to bring cost issues into the digital strategy and for the issue of cost to be resolved so that digital teaching and learning can be undertaken in a manner that is feasible for all.

The Dean thanked Dr Rooney for her input and noted that she looked forward to the next stage of the project and Dr Rooney welcomed members to contact her if they had any further queries or wished to engage further with the project.
XX GS/21-22/060 Procedures for operation of online viva voce examination

The Dean advised that two additional suggestions (Items 9 and 22) from GSC members had been added to the document and the updated document had been circulated to members. Item 9 referred to a viva voce examination having to be terminated – “until it is possible for it to proceed in person or online as appropriate” (update included ‘or online as appropriate’). Item 22 included the addition of ‘and supervisor’ to read “Following the viva voce examination, the student and supervisor must leave the online meeting to allow the examiners to discuss a recommendation.”

It was further suggested that Item 23 should also include reference to the supervisor, as per Item 22: “Once a recommendation is agreed, the candidate and the supervisor are invited to re-join the meeting to be advised of the outcome of the examination.”

Decision GS/21-22/060: GSC agreed the updated ‘Procedures for the Operation of an Online Viva Voce Examination of a Research Thesis or Dissertation’, to include three additional amendments agreed at the meeting, to Council.

XX GS/21-22/061 Award for excellence in supervision

The Dean advised members that the circulated memo contained a revised draft of the Award for Excellence in Supervision of PhD Research Students. The process of the award was discussed, and it was agreed that quality rather than quantity of nominations was preferred. It had previously been suggested that there could be a risk that excellence of one student’s experience could come at the cost of the experience of other students working under that supervisor. It was agreed that a strong nomination would trigger the process to see if this is a widely held view, to include an invitation to other students under that supervisor to submit an indication of their support for the nomination.

There was a query about whether the title of the award would imply that most supervision is not excellent, or perhaps, even adequate. The Dean advised that the title of this award was similar to the ‘Trinity Excellence in Teaching Award’ to demonstrate that research is valued as much as teaching.

There was a concern about the award being used as part of the promotion process in Schools. The Dean noted that as there was only one award per Faculty annually, it would not become a default for promotion.

In light of the proposed criteria for evaluation it was suggested that perhaps a second award for early-stage supervisors was needed. This proposal was well received by members.

Decision GS/21-22/061: GSC recommended the most recent draft of ‘Award for Excellence in Supervision of PhD Research Students’ to Council, but it will be reviewed following the first conferral, to perhaps include a distinction between early career and established researcher.

XX GS/21-22/062 Requirement to submit hard copy version of research thesis

The Dean introduced the item by referencing her memo to GSC which noted that since COVID-19, a
derogation removing the need to submit a hard-bound copy of a final thesis to the Library was introduced. The memo explains that the Dean, in reviewing the requirement, sought to explore further whether in future GSC might seek approval to (a) remove the derogation and resume the requirement for hard copy submission; (b) seek to retain the derogation until such time as we are confident that the public health environment has changed sufficiently to minimise the risk of having to revert and change policies again; or (c) the option of retaining the current practice of submission of an e-thesis as the primary requirement.

However, the attached memo from the Librarian, noted that while TARA is an effective and stable storage system for digital data, it is not a digital preservation system. As such, there would be significant risks to the medium-term security of access to theses stored in TARA. Details of this vulnerability were set out in the memo. The Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience confirmed the details regarding the limitations of TARA and noted that in terms of its due diligence responsibility, the Library would support the removal of the derogation and revert to hard copies of final theses being submitted.

The Dean noted her disappointment that until a system can be put in place to store final theses in the long-term, there is no option but to remove the derogation. The Dean clarified that the derogation in the current Calendar is valid until the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

**Decision GS/21-22/062**: GSC recommended for Council approval, the removal of the Calendar III derogation suspending the requirement for a hard-bound copy of final theses to be submitted to the Library, unless measures can be put in place to ensure the longer term preservation of the digital version of the thesis as the version of record.

**XX**

**GS/21-22/063 Postgraduate Renewal update**

The Dean confirmed that, as part of the first College-wide consultation, invitations would be emailed the following week asking stakeholders to participate in an online survey on the Postgraduate Renewal Programme. Four surveys were created to address four separate cohorts (postgraduate research students, postgraduate taught students, professional staff and academic staff) and responses would help identify needs and priorities so that the programme would be designed in a way that is meaningful to the College community.

**Action GS/21-22/063**: Members are asked to encourage their colleagues and students to participate in the upcoming survey to identify needs and priorities of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme.

**XX**

**GS/21-22/064 COVID-19 and update from COLSAG**

The Dean noted that a large supply of FFP2 masks had been purchased from funding released by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. She advised that some masks had been distributed among students before Christmas. The current order of masks will be prioritised for certain cohorts of staff and students for specific circumstances, such as those attending field trips and for staff categorised as at significant risk due to an underlying health
condition. She confirmed that a process for Schools to access masks as required is currently being finalised.

The Dean acknowledged that all courses were experiencing situations where students or staff were unable to be present for face-to-face lectures. She reiterated the message from COLSAG to record lectures where possible and to consider other options of sharing information with students, e.g., ‘mop-up’ sessions, access to recorded lecture from the previous year etc., as best suits the course and cohort of students.

The Dean addressed a query about whether online Courts of Examiners would be permitted and confirmed that both the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Vice Provost are happy to approve requests from Schools for same.

XX GS/21-22/065 Any Other Business

(i) Unconditional offer from School amended to a conditional offer by the Academic Registry

One Director noted that an applicant for MPhil in their School had been recommended an unconditional offer. However, the Academic Registry had amended the offer to be conditional due to one reference not being dated. It was felt by the School that this was undue interference on academic opinion of what would constitute a good application.

Action GS/21-22/065: The Dean of Graduate Studies will liaise with the Director of the Academic Registry in relation to an unconditional offer from a School being amended to a conditional offer.

(ii) Examinations in the Semester 2 period

It was queried whether examinations would take place online or face-to-face in the Semester 2 period. The Dean noted that she was happy to speak to Directors about the potential decisions to be made. Although the public health context has changed very significantly over the recent weeks, experience suggests the importance of remaining agile in planning for how best to ensure learning outcomes have been met. The Dean emphasised that it was important that, given their knowledge about their own modules, module coordinators should ensure that assessment methods are robust, fair and appropriate for learning outcomes associated with their own modules. She also advised that people should plan realistically, including planning for in-person assessments if that was deemed the most appropriate format, but that they also need to have an alternative plan in place.

(iii) Postgraduate representatives

The President of the Graduate Students’ Union noted that the GSU was in the process of scheduling meetings with Schools in relation to the postgraduate representative issues in Semester 1. The Dean suggested that the Schools would be sent the name of the postgraduate representatives in advance of the meeting.
Section B for noting and approval

A memorandum from the Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy requested the delay of 2 micro-credentials from Semester 2, 2021/22 to Semester 1, 2022/23.

**Decision GS/21-22/066**: GSC recommended for Council’s approval the requested delay of 2 micro-credentials (‘Digital Technologies in Human Services’ and ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Policy and People’) from Semester 2, 2021/22 to Semester 1, 2022/23.

Section C for noting

There were no items in Section C.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12.10pm.

Prof. Martine Smith

Date: 27 January 2022