

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 24 May, 2007  
Boardroom, Provost's House

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**Present:** Prof. Patrick Prendergast, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),  
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:  
Prof. Paul Coughlan, School of Business  
Prof. John Kelly, School of Chemistry  
Prof. June Nunn, School of Dental Science  
Prof. Robert Holton, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy  
Dr Richard Porter, School of Biochemistry & Immunology  
Dr John Clancy, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Dr Philip Matthews, School of Education  
Prof. Nicholas Grene, School of English  
Prof. Cormac Ó Cuilleaináin, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies  
Prof. John Saeed, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences  
Dr Richard Timoney, School of Mathematics  
Dr Kenneth Irvine, School of Natural Sciences  
Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, School of Histories & Humanities  
Dr Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology  
Dr Helen Buckley, School of Social Work & Social Policy  
Prof. Mark Lawler, School of Medicine  
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (*Ex officio*)  
Ms Ruth Palileo, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)  
Mr Paul Laird, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

**Apologies:** Prof. Ian Robertson, Dean of Research (*Ex officio*)  
Mr John Lawlor, MIS Manager (*Ex officio*)  
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:  
Mr Brendan Tangney, School of Computer Science & Statistics  
Dr Matthew Causey, School of Drama, Film & Music  
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, School of Physics  
Prof. Henry Rice, School of Engineering  
Dr Damien Brennan, School of Nursing & Midwifery  
Dr Neville Cox, School of Law  
Prof. Seamus Martin, Vice Deanery of Genetics & Microbiology

**In attendance:** Prof. Carol O'Sullivan, Incoming Dean of Graduate Studies  
Ms Ewa Sadowska, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)  
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

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The Dean welcomed Prof. Carol O'Sullivan, the incoming Dean of Graduate Studies, who came to the meeting in attendance.

**201.0 Minutes of 26 April 2007**

The minutes of the meeting of 26 April 2007 were approved by the Committee as circulated and signed by the Dean.

**201.1 Matters arising**

- a) *Re 200.2 and 200.6 (respectively):* Two course proposals D.Dent.Ch. and Higher Diploma in Midwifery had been approved by the University Council on 9 May 2007.
- b) *Re 200.5:* The Dean confirmed that the University Council had approved the additional nine graduate programme proposals in an outline. He also advised that a call is expected to be announced by IRCSET within a matter of days for graduate programme proposals to commence in September/October 2007, and that possibly there will be another call later on in the year for proposals to commence in 2008.
- c) *Re 200.8:* The Dean advised that he verbally had passed on to Dr David G. Lloyd, Associate Dean of Research the recommendation of the Committee and that he would convey that recommendation in an official memo to Dr Lloyd shortly.

d) *Re 199.2*: Prof. Mark Lawler, School of Medicine, thanked the Dean for his support for the MSc in Biomedical Sciences which had been passed by the Heads' Committee recently and had been submitted to the University Council on 6 June 2007.

### **201.2 Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) (1 yr p-t)**

The Dean asked Dr Kevin Tierney, the DTLP from the School of Psychology to speak to the circulated proposal in place of Dr Rita Honan, the proposed course director, who was not in a position to attend the meeting. Dr Tierney explained that the postgraduate diploma course is being proposed in response to a strong community demand for professionals with training in Applied Behaviour Analysis. The demand for ABA professionals has grown sharply locally, nationally and internationally in recent years because of the needs of families with children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The effectiveness of ABA in the education of children with ASD is well established in outcome studies, but often the training of professionals who work with such children and their families does not include expertise in ABA. This is particularly true in Ireland. This course is intended to contribute to meeting the needs for qualified, ethical, research-based behaviour analysts in Ireland. Dr Tierney subsequently spoke in detail about the modular structure of the programme and its eligibility criteria for entry. He also confirmed that the School would discontinue the current extra-mural course in ABA as of October 2007 for new admissions. Dr Tierney emphasised that the School has a clearly defined strategy to develop the ABA discipline further and would be bringing a proposal for a Masters course to the committee in the next academic year. In this respect the School is currently seeking permission for a new appointment in ABA to support the planned Masters course. The Dean thanked Dr Tierney and expressed his support for the proposal noting that it seemed to be an important development for the ABA discipline in the School and in Ireland.

In a discussion which followed a number of issues were raised and the following clarifications were obtained:

- on the allocation of ECTS: what appears to be a rather limited number of contact hours seems to be satisfactorily complemented by an extensive out-of-College professional training of students in a course-related working environment;
- that students will be expected to be in relevant employment, and that a significant proportion of their work will be professionally supervised; it is only that supervised practice which got an ECTS allocation in the course proposal;
- that supervisors will be qualified analysts accredited to a U.S. professional body, the Behavior Analysis Certification Board recognised internationally. The committee was reassured that these supervisors will be of the appropriate professional and academic standing. A list of supervisors available on the course will be appended to the Council submission;
- that normally employers would pay for supervision on-site;
- that the Department of Education and Science is likely to pay the students' fees and supervision costs, and that the School intends to further develop its relationship with the Department with a view to possibly obtaining their commitment to provide a block grant for the course. However, to progress with these developments the School wishes to begin with the Postgraduate Diploma in 2007/08.

The Committee approved the course proposal subject to implementation of the above clarifications in the Council submission.

### **201.3 Discussion of changes to PhD continuation fee**

The Dean introduced this item by explaining to the Committee that the ARAM Taskforce at its meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007 noted the mismatch between the HEA policy which supports a four-year full-time PhD and College policy in which full-time students only pay a full-fee for three years. The ARAM Taskforce consequently requested that the Dean bring the issue of aligning the PhD fee pattern with the HEA funding policy to this Committee. In a discussion which followed the Committee were not against the principle that the fee patterns be brought into alignment, but expressed strong reservations about its possible implementation in a current situation where funding for full-time research students is normally available for the first three years on the register. It was noted that College research awards were also only for three years. The Committee was of the view that a priority effort should lie in making the funding bodies change their policies and extend covering the student fees for four years. All were also of the view that if the new fee structure were ever to be implemented it should not apply to continuing students but only to new entrants.

In response to the GSU query about the justification of some Schools in College contemplating levying additional fees on students in years over 4 on the PhD register the Dean has emphasised that this would not be a legitimate practice and all Schools would need to make provisions in their financial planning for the inevitability that not all their PhD students will complete by the end of the fourth year. Full-time PhD students have the right to remain on the register for at least 5 years, and can continue beyond that with permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

In a further discussion, the issue of part-time research fees was returned to and the Dean clarified that the ARAM Taskforce recommended approval of the part-time fee. The proposal will now be considered the Finance Committee and, if approved there, will go to Board for final approval. It should then be implemented for new entrants to the register from October 2007.

#### **201.4 Discussion of award of taught Masters with Distinction**

The Dean welcomed the Registrar Dr Juergen Barkhoff who had been invited for this item, noting that the circulated document was from them both. The Registrar began by supporting the idea of an award of Masters with distinction on the grounds that it should increase the visibility of students with exceptional research potential and improve their funding prospects for further doctoral training. He also conveyed the feedback from the Proctors' Office which does not see any major practical issues likely to result for that office from implementing the new proposal. At the commencement ceremony, the holders of Masters with Distinction will go first following the current practice for holders of Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction.

In a discussion which followed a number of issues were raised. The majority of the committee members were not in favour of numerically grading dissertations and an issue arose how to transparently identify excellent dissertations without resorting to numerical grading. A further issue was that some courses may wish to recognise excellent performance in other components of the course, i.e. not just the dissertation. It was finally decided that the provision for an award of a taught Masters with Distinction would exist for all taught Masters courses offered in the College [M.Phil, M.Sc. for taught courses, and professional Masters courses (e.g., M.Ed., M.S.W., M.B.A.)]. The award of a taught Masters with Distinction will be based on achievement of a distinction in the dissertation, and also such conditions as may be laid down by the course committee. Distinctions will only be awarded to students who have satisfied the examiners on all elements of the course. Criteria for the award of a distinction for the dissertation will be proposed by the course committee and formally approved by the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in each School before being published in the course handbook. The degree parchment would state that the degree is awarded with Distinction.

The Committee were happy to approve the proposals of awarding a Masters with Distinction as of the academic year 2007/08. The Dean undertook to email each Committee member with a draft submission to the University Council to get their sign off on it and then to consult with the Registrar who will bring the final submission to the University Council on 6 June 2007. The Dean will bring a Calendar part 2 change for 2007 reflective of the agreed proposal to the next Graduate Studies Committee.

#### **201.5 Approval of postgraduate modularisation in the School of Histories and Humanities**

The Dean invited Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, the DTLP from the School of Histories and Humanities, to speak to the circulated document (Item B1). Prof. O'Halpin explained that this was a compliance document put together by a major collective effort in the School in response to the requirement of the University Council of 31st July 2006 to modularise all postgraduate courses in multiples of 5 ECTS. The School has taken this as an opportunity to review its M.Phil programmes with a view to identifying sharing modules across programmes. Sharing modules increases the range of options that can be offered and improves student choice. The document is all-embracing and all five long-standing Masters courses in the School have been included in it. It is also extremely comprehensive in that each course module (totalling 45 altogether) is presented in an agreed format which clearly lists its academic aims, working methods/module delivery, learning outcomes, and outlines the syllabus and assessment. The modularisation exercise has enabled the School to move towards a more uniform structure for its current and new M.Phil programmes, and this will increase opportunities for sharing courses both amongst the existing and new programmes.

The School has also been looking at opportunities created by the formation of the School to develop a common study skills element that will be taken by all of the School's M.Phil students. This skills element already exists in all of the programmes but is currently being taught separately within each M.Phil. The modularisation exercise has enabled the School to set up this element as a joint module, to be taken by all students, with contributions from lecturing staff on all of the School's programmes. This will avoid duplication and enable students to benefit from the range of skills teaching on offer across the School. It will also promote the exchange of ideas and experience across the taught postgraduate community and will provide an introduction to generic skills. All students will take an appropriate selection of training courses offered by IS Services and by the Library. They will also participate in cross-disciplinary symposia. This module will be weighted at 5 ECTS and will be included as an element in all of the School's M.Phil programmes. The School weights the dissertation element in all of its M.Phil programmes at 30 ECTS. The other 60 ECTS will be divided between the elements that make up the constituent parts of the individual programmes. Prof. O'Halpin thanked Dr Bebra Birch, the Administrator of the School, and Ms Ewa Sadowska from the Graduate Studies Office for their comprehensive administrative support for this project.

The Dean congratulated the School for being one of the first to complete the postgraduate modularisation process in College and emphasised that the process is going to roll out across all the Schools in the next academic year. The Committee approved the Calendar part 2 changes resulting from the modularisation exercise.

**201.6 Calendar Part 2 changes for 2007/08**

The Committee noted and approved Calendar Part 2 changes for 2007/08 as circulated under Item B2 a-c and Item 3. With reference to point B2 (c) a change was accepted to the proposed Amendment 2) to read that "Final submissions of taught Masters Dissertations should be retained for at least five years by the schools."

**201.7 AOB**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11 am. The next meeting is scheduled for 21 June 2007.



**Prof. Patrick J. Prendergast.**

Date: 24 May 2007