

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 2nd February 2012
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Professor Veronica Campbell, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Dr Martin Fellenz, School of Business
Professor Simon Wilson, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Dr Claire Healy, School of Dental Science
Dr Melissa Sihra, School of Drama, Film & Music
Dr Conor McGuckin, School of Education
Dr Sam Slote, School of English
Dr Joseph Clarke, School of Histories & Humanities
Dr Jurgen Uhlich, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Dr Jeffrey Kallen, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Dr Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics
Dr John Gormley, School of Medicine
Professor Anna Davies, School of Natural Sciences
Ms Anne-Marie Brady, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Dr Mauro Ferreira, School of Physics
Dr Gillian Wylie, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Dr Gail McElroy, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Dr Stephanie Holt, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Ms Mary O'Connor, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)
Ms Alex Anderson, CAPSL Representative (*Ex officio*)
Ms Lee Mills, Information System Services Representative

Apologies: Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Isabel Rozas, School of Chemistry
Professor Timothy Foster, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Dr Andrew Harkin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

Mr Martin McAndrew, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

In attendance: Ms Jennifer Hill, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

GS/11-12/025 Minutes of 15th December 2011

The minutes of the meeting of 15th December 2011 were approved by the Committee as circulated. Clarification was provided regarding item **GS/11-12/020** and it was confirmed that for the Indian Scholarship scheme, decisions on the application should be made separately to decisions for the scholarship, and that a decision on the application should be made within 2 weeks.

GS/11-12/026 Matters Arising

In relation to item **GS/11-12/017** The Dean confirmed that a working group has now been established to consider and make recommendations on a new format for student evaluation of postgraduate courses. The GSC members of the working group are the Dean of Graduate Studies, Professor Jeffrey Kallen and Mr Martin McAndrew.

The M.Sc. in Translational Oncology (**GS/11-12/018**) has received very positive feedback following external review. Subject to further discussion with the School of Chemistry this will now be submitted to the University Council for consideration.

The paper on Academic Streamlining of Regulations (**GS/11-12/019**) received strong support from the University Council. Each School has been invited to provide feedback and to identify courses that may not fit with the proposed models and this will be reviewed by a working group, chaired by Professor John Scattergood.

In answer to a query on the grading of taught masters it was confirmed that the grading of Fail / Pass / Pass with Distinction would remain in place and that provision has been made in the new Student Information System for this. However, numerical values may still be used to determine a student's overall mark, where appropriate.

In relation to the implementation of the policy of students repeating work, it was noted that the document focused on undergraduate courses and further consideration should be given to accommodating one year taught postgraduate students also.

The Dean confirmed she is still following up on the administrative issues raised regarding the Relationship with Brown University (**GS/11-12/021**) and would report back on this at the next meeting. It was confirmed that there is no commitment for a Brown University student to return to TCD for postgraduate studies but it is hoped that they will. The minutes will be changed to reflect this.

GS/11-12/027 M.Sc. in Immunology

The Dean introduced Professor Cliona O'Farrelly and asked her to speak to the circulated proposal. Professor O'Farrelly explained immunology has emerged as an area of particular research strength and achievement in Ireland and, specifically, Trinity College. The School of Biochemistry and Immunology have already developed the first undergraduate degree in immunology but there are still limited opportunities in postgraduate training in this area.

There are plans to appoint a new lecturer in immunology who will also serve as the course coordinator and this position will be self-financing. However, the School of Biochemistry and Immunology have confirmed they will absorb the costs should this not be possible in the short-term.

In answer to a query it was agreed that the timing of examinations and the option of putting a student on academic probation should they fail examinations in Michaelmas term would be given further consideration.

It was also confirmed that there could potentially be a part-time option of the course added in the future which would allow for students to study the course outside of the traditional 9am-5pm structure.

GS/11-12/028 Course Year Nomenclature

The Dean introduced a memo from the Vice Provost-Chief Academic Officer on course year nomenclature that had been circulated for the committee to review as part of the communications streamlining effort. The committee approved the memo and noted that the proposed nomenclature for postgraduate courses was consistent with current practice.

GS/11-12/029 Update from the IUA

The Dean drew the Committee's attention to a number of relevant points in the circulated paper on Ph.D. Policy within the European context, including:

The Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training. While this does not attempt to change the nature of the qualification of the Ph.D., it does acknowledge the way in which doctoral education is moving and there are already many good examples of this in TCD.

Outcomes of the Irish Universities Study which describes the impact of structured doctoral training on the student experience.

The Dean advised that the HEA will be conducting a review of Doctoral Education in the coming months and will review completion rates and time to completion. The collation of this data will involve the Graduate Studies Office. There may also be some interaction with Ph.D. Supervisors, programmes P.I.'s and students.

The IUA is coordinating some potential interactions with the Brazilian government which may open opportunities for scholarships for Brazilian students to undertake doctoral education in Ireland. The Dean undertook to keep the committee informed of any developments in this area.

GS/11-12/030 Supervisor Workshops

The Dean asked the Committee to consider areas in which supervisor workshops may be of interest.

Discussion took place highlighting several areas including: clarity on the supervision guidelines especially when there is more than one supervisor or when a student has engagement with staff members other than their supervisor, publication credit, expectations of the student / supervisor after year one, year two, etc., advice on deadlines regarding the HEA census such as no backdating of registration, how to approach supervision of a student not based in Dublin.

The School of Education confirmed that they are developing a code of practice that they would be willing to share.

The Dean requested nominations for a working group to develop a document on research supervision and membership was agreed to be: Dr Conor McGuckin, Dr Martin Fellenz, Ms Anne-Marie Brady, Dr Derek Nolan, Dr Melissa Sihra and representation from the GSU.

The working group will meet to consider existing documentation and practices with a view to bringing recommendations back to the Graduate Studies Committee.

GS/11-12/031 AOB

It was confirmed that the move to a new online system 'MyTCD' for direct applications (including all postgraduate applications) was scheduled to take place by the end of February 2012. Intense testing of the system is ongoing and the new system will only go live when testing has been completed satisfactorily. PAC is still open for

applications and anyone interested in applying for taught or research should be steered to the Graduate Studies Office website where information will be updated to direct them to PAC until such time as 'MyTCD' is made live. There will be a period of dual running of both systems from the go-live of SITS. This is necessary to facilitate the phasing out of PAC and maintain continuity for applicants who started the process in the PAC system.

Development of the online application form is taking place and existing supplementary questions will either be incorporated into the application form or made available as an uploaded supplementary form. At present there are several Schools who do not wish to have research applications on PAC unless the individual has already made contact with the School and been invited to make an application. For these Schools the PAC codes are not available on either the PAC or GSO websites and, instead, the applicant is instructed to contact their potential supervisor/School to obtain the relevant code. It was queried whether provision had been made for this in SITS and agreed that this would be followed up with the GeneSIS project team.

The Dean drew the Committee's attention to a flyer that had been circulated regarding a module on Library Information Skills for PhD students and asked the Committee to make students within their Schools aware of this. It was noted that the flyer should be amended to make it clear who should be contacted for further information on the module. More information and a flyer will be made available on additional generic skills modules.

It was acknowledged that the Postgraduate Open Day and the central organisation of the event went very well. The feedback received so far from the survey of those who attended has been very positive. Consideration may need to be given in the future regarding space as some Schools require more space than others.

The Committee was informed that a final list of unregistered students (mostly research) would be sent out to each School who should ensure that all students who should be registered for the current academic year complete this process prior to the HEA census taking place at the end of February. An additional list of PhD students in year two will also be sent out as a reminder regarding the Ph.D. confirmation process. In answer to a query it was agreed that the Confirmation on the Ph.D. register form will be amended to provide an option for schools to indicate when a PhD student has not been successful at the confirmation process and will not be continuing as a student.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10am.

Prof. Veronica Campbell

Date: 3rd February 2012