



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held in College Boardroom in Trinity Business School
at 10am on Thursday 18 September 2025

XX = Council relevance

Present (Ex officio):

Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair)

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Rachel Mc Loughlin, School of Biochemistry & Immunology
Professor Wladislaw Rivkin, Trinity Business School
Professor Gavin Doherty, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education
Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, School of Engineering
Professor Alice Jorgensen, School of English
Professor Rachel Moss, School of Histories & Humanities
Professor Deirdre Ahern, School of Law
Professor Paul Conroy, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences
Professor Andreea Nicoara, School of Mathematics
Professor Stephen Maher, School of Medicine
Professor Micha Ruhl, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Brian Keogh, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Professor Cathal Cadogan, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Graham Cross, School of Physics
Professor Frédérique Vallieres, School of Psychology
Professor Etain Tannam, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies
Professor Eavan Brady, School of Social Work & Social Policy

Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L)
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience
Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services
Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor's Office
Ms Ewa Sadowska, Administrative Officer (Academic Affairs, TT&L)

Not in attendance – Vacant:

1st Graduate Student Representative
2nd Graduate Student Representative

In attendance for all items:

Ms Frances Leogue, IT support Administrative Officer, Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies

In attendance for Postgraduate Renewal Items:

Dr Rionnagh Sheridan, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal)

Apologies:

Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research

Prof. Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry
Prof. Evangelia Rigaki, School of Creative Arts
Professor Padhraig Fleming, School of Dental Science
Prof. Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics & Microbiology
Prof. Théophile Munyangayo, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Prof. Selim Gulesci, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Prof. Ana Perez-Luno, Academic Director, Portal

Ms Patricia Callaghan, (outgoing) Academic Secretary (TT&L)
Ms Patricia Maguire, (incoming) Academic Secretary (TT&L)
Ms Leona Coady, Programme Director (Postgraduate Renewal Programme)
Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (Postgraduate Renewal)
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

In attendance for all items:

Prof. Joseph Roche, Associate Dean of Research, on behalf of Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research
Prof. Noah Buckley on behalf of Prof. Selim Gulesci, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy DTLP

In attendance for individual items:

Prof. Noel McCarthy, School of Medicine/CHARM EU, for item GS/25-26/003
Prof. Baidyanath Biswas, Course Director (Trinity Business School) for item GS/25-26/004
Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs, TTL) for item GS/25-26/005
Ms Anne Marie O'Mullane, Deputy Secretary to the College, and Ms Sheena Brown, Project Manager (Secretary's Office) for item GS/25-26/006
Mr Mark Sheridan, Senior Project Manager, and Ms Helen O'Hara, Lead (WP#3) for items GS/25-26/013 and GS/25-26/014

As this was the first meeting of 2025/26, the Dean extended a special warm welcome to new Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) from the Schools of Education, English, Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, Law, and Mathematics who were commencing as GSC members. Referring to the provision under the Terms of Reference for the Graduate Studies Committee, which allows for the co-option of two additional members as required, the Dean welcomed Prof. Joseph Roche, Associate Dean of Research, to attend on behalf of Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research, and Prof. Noah Buckley on behalf of Prof. Selim Gulesci, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy DTLP.

XX Section A

XX GS/25-26/001 Minutes of GSC of 1 May 2025

The minutes were approved as circulated.

XX GS/25-26/002 Matters Arising

The Dean advised members that all Actions from the May meeting of the previous year had been completed or attended to. She also noted that all Decisions from the previous meeting on Agenda A and B were approved by the last Council on the 14th May 2025. Matters Arising were closed off and covered in the Dean's memorandum circulated in advance of the meeting. In response to a query about the proposed ordinary Postgraduate Certificate exit award, the Dean clarified that criteria and operational issues were still being finalised with a view to the award being brought for further discussion at a future meeting.

XX GS/25-26/003 Approval in principle for New Course Proposal submission for Erasmus Mundus funding for Joint Masters on Planetary Health (PATH) – Prof. Noel McCarthy (School of Medicine/CHARM EU)

The Dean invited Prof. Noel McCarthy (School of Medicine/CHARM-EU), who noted that approval in principle had been sought from the Graduate Studies Committee for the CHARM-EU Master's on Planetary Health, in support of its submission to the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJM) funding call in February 2026.

Course accreditation for universities participating in the bid, other than Trinity, is covered by central EU accreditation. However, to support Trinity participating in the full funding application, approval in principle for the course is required while acknowledging that final approval will be subject to a full accreditation by an EU accreditation authority and Trinity's approval.

Five universities of the CHARM-EU alliance (PATH consortium) secured Erasmus Mundus Design Measures (EMDM) funding in September 2024 (€60,000). This funding supported the design of a Master's on Planetary Health, prior to the forthcoming submission to the highly competitive EMJM funding call in February 2026. If successful, the EMJM provides funding for running the programme, including fees and other costed institutional input, and offering competitive scholarships to students. Should the application not be successful in the call, the course will not proceed. The application submission will require all usual College sign-off processes, including financial.

The joint Masters aims to address global planetary health challenges through a transdisciplinary and challenge-based learning approach and is coordinated by Eotvos Lorand University (ELTE) with collaborators from Trinity College Dublin (Trinity), University of Barcelona (UB), Abo Akademi University (AAU), and Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMU), members of the CHARM-EU alliance. Trinity will co-deliver programme modules, contribute to joint governance, and support mobility activities in line with CHARM-EU procedures.

To be eligible for EMJM funding, the Master's requires institutional endorsement in principle from all participating institutions listed above. In addition, external quality assurance increases the possibility of the programme being granted EMJM funding. The programme follows the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, which allows an external quality assurance agency to evaluate the programme, with accreditation then recognised by participating member states. However, as a self-awarding body, Trinity must also complete its own internal accreditation process.

From September 2024, the PATH consortium has developed the programme by collaboratively producing a Self-Evaluation Report (SER), formalizing institutional cooperation via a Cooperation Agreement, and engaging in accreditation following the European Approach to the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes with the Catalan Quality Agency, Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya (AQU). If approved in principle by GSC and Council, PATH will submit their application for the prestigious Erasmus Mundus funding call in February 2026. If PATH is successful in acquiring EMJM funding, the full joint Master's programme will be developed during the funding period, and formal institutional approval will be sought from GSC and Council, with the intention of commencing the programme in September 2027.

Prof. McCarthy underlined that this two-year programme comprising four semesters is highly innovative and transdisciplinary addressing in a competitive format a global ecological crisis. The weighting of modules is more varied than that in Trinity, with ECTS values between 1 and 30 credits. Semester 3 incorporates an internship and mobility while the final fourth semester comprises a research project weighted at 30 ECTS.

A brief discussion focused on student fees, the structural and content-related aspects of the proposed Master's that distinguish it from competitors, and the financial and visa support for the compulsory mobility component, particularly for non-EU students. The committee was satisfied to endorse the proposal, granting it approval in principle.

Decision GS/25-26/003: The committee recommended the submission for Erasmus Mundus funding for Joint Masters on Planetary Health (PATH) for Council approval in principle subject to full accreditation by a competent EU accreditation authority and College approval of the final submission and funding should the February 2026 bid be successful.

The Dean thanked Prof. McCarthy for his presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX GS/25-26/004 Revised Course Proposal: title modification to MSc in Business Analytics and AI and new MSc in Business Analytics and AI (Online) part-time Strand – Prof. Baidyanath Biswas, Course Director (Trinity Business School) to present

The Dean informed members that she had received correspondence from the School of Computer Science and Statistics (SCSS), which raised concerns regarding some of the module content and the proposed course title change to include the term "AI." Unfortunately, due to a prior teaching commitment, the SCSS DTLP was unavailable to attend the early part of the meeting and provide details for his concerns. While the Dean was hopeful that the concerns could be resolved through further discussion between the Schools, any resolution will be forthcoming after the meeting. As such, the proposal will return to the October meeting for final approval, allowing any immediate issues to be raised and addressed at the current meeting for approval in principle.

The Dean also noted that, given the broad and cross-disciplinary nature of AI applications, the topic could be considered relevant to every discipline. While SCSS undoubtedly plays a critical role in advancing AI from a technical and research standpoint, AI as both a tool and subject of inquiry extends well beyond the domain of computer science. Law, ethics, medicine, engineering, business, and the humanities engage with AI in ways that do not necessarily necessitate technical validation or academic oversight from SCSS.

As such, requiring SCSS involvement in every course proposal related to AI risks creating bottlenecks and unnecessarily centralizing oversight, which may not be practical or productive in light of the growing impact of AI-related innovations across all discipline areas. Using the TBS proposal as an example, the Dean suggested that a broader discussion take place at the next meeting to consider guiding principles how best to position the issue of AI's pervasive interdisciplinary relevance and integration across disciplines vis-a-vis the SCSS's own commanding AI research competence. The TBS DTLP underlined that in business, the application of AI is a very significant and rapidly expanding topic.

The Dean invited Prof. Baidyanath Biswas to speak to the proposal. The prospective Programme Director noted that Trinity Business School proposes five modifications to the current MSc in Business Analytics, retaining its overall credit volume of 90 ECTS, to commence in 2026/27. The modifications include:

1. Revision of the title of the current MSc in Business Analytics to "MSc in Business Analytics and AI" and a corresponding change to the title of an exit award from the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Analytics to "Postgraduate Diploma in Business Analytics and AI".
2. Re-allocation of the credit volume 40/50 respectively to year 1 and 2 on the revised part-time "MSc in Business Analytics and AI". This change aims to better equalise the distribution of credits

over the two years of the existing part-time in person programme, from 60/30 to 40/50 thereby responding to feedback from industry partners on the current challenges of completing 60 ECTS part-time in a single year.

3. Addition of a new online two-year part-time Strand “MSc in Business Analytics and AI (Online)” with 40/50 credits to be governed by the current Course Committee and supported by the existing Admissions sub-committee. Dr. Baidyanath Biswas, Assistant Professor in Business Analytics, will be the Programme Director.

4. Revision of the Programme-level Learning Outcomes to match the revised “MSc in Business Analytics and AI” and the new Online Strand.

5. Revision of existing and inclusion of new modules.

The proposed revisions have been approved at the School level by the TBS Executive Committee on the 19th of June 2025. The Dean of the Business School approved the finances on the 15th of August 2025.

Discussion which ensued centred around

- 1) the resource implication to ensure sufficient availability of staff to supervise additional research projects especially from the new online strand: online supervision has already been successfully tried on other programmes in the TBS; supervision is allocated to core and adjunct staff and the same arrangement will apply to the new part time strands which might bring in around thirty additional students; students are supervised in batches of five and it is estimated that around ten supervisors need to be recruited which is manageable for TBS;
- 2) implications of the 40/50 split in year1 and 2: first three modules are delivered in year 1 and the rest in year 2 including the company project. The Postgraduate Diploma exit award is available after completion of 60 credits making students register on year 2 and pay the relevant fee. The TBS DTLP noted that a negligible number of Masters students have availed of the exit award over the years without being eligible for the 2 year fee reimbursement.

The Dean requested that the exit award fee implication be flagged transparently to applicants to all part-time courses in the TBS with the 40/50 split. The Postgraduate Student Support Officer suggested that the 40/50 split on part-time courses be monitored over the next few years to establish how the split works fee-wise for students exiting with postgraduate diploma award. The vast majority of part-time Masters programmes in College are structured around a 60/30 ECTS split over two years. As ever more students find the completion of 60 ECTS in one year exceptionally demanding, there may be increased interest in alternative (e.g., 40/50 ECTS) structures, potentially requiring consideration of new fee structures.

Action GS/25-26/004(i): TBS to flag transparently the exit award fee implication to applicants to all part-time courses in the TBS with the 40/50 split.

Action GS/25-26/004(ii): TBS to monitor the number of students leaving with an exit postgraduate diploma on new 40/50 split part-time courses to support any discussions regarding new fee regulations that GSC may need to consider.

Decision GS/25-26/004(i): The committee endorsed in principle the proposed five modifications on the revised course proposal of MSc in Business Analytics and AI and new MSc in Business Analytics and AI (Online) part-time Strand.

Decision GS/25-26/004(ii): The committee recommended that although endorsed in principle, the course proposal of MSc in Business Analytics and AI and new MSc in Business

Analytics and AI (Online) part-time strand should be re-submitted for a final approval by Council to the GSC meeting in October.

The Dean thanked Prof. Baidyanath Biswas for his presentation, the TBS DTLP Prof. Wladislaw Rivkin for his additional feedback and members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX GS/25-26/005 Academic Policies update 2025/26 – Memorandum from Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs, TTL) to present

This item followed GS/25-26/006. Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer, noted that Academic Policies, listed on the [Policies Hub](#), are normally reviewed every three years to make sure that they are fit-for-purpose and respond to changes to external regulations and legislation or internal/strategic initiatives. New Policies are also developed in response to identified needs. The Education Policy Developer summarised the policies developed or reviewed the previous year coming into effect in 2025/26 paying particular attention to the Extensions Policy. She also referred to Policies and Procedures due to be reviewed in 2025/26 to come into effect in 2026/27.

The Education Policy Developer reported that last year's approach to collecting feedback from members and Schools was reviewed over the summer and an amended process allowing for more consultation with Schools and elimination of overlap between GSC and USC was outlined to the committee: an initial high level policy review is to be brought to GSC/USC for feedback opening up a 6-week consultation process with the Schools, with a possibility that a joint USC/GSC working group incorporating volunteers may be set up to support the consultative process enabling efficient capture of UG and PG issues for the policy to be finally considered by each committee.

Action GS/25-26/005: The Education Policy Developer requested members' feedback on how best to capture consultative input, also comments on members' experiences of using any of the Policies due for review in 2025/26 be emailed to edonnell@tcd.ie or submitted via [MS Forms](#).

Decision GS/25-26/005: The committee endorsed the proposed new consultative process for policies and procedures to capture feedback on new and revised policy development.

The Dean thanked the Education Policy Developer for her presentation and members for their endorsement of the consultative process.

XX GS/25-26/006 Revised Fitness to Practise Policy – Memorandum from Victoria Butler, Secretary to the College/Director of Governance); Anne Marie O'Mullane, Deputy Secretary to the College, and Sheena Brown (Project Manager) Secretary's Office to present

This item was moved up the Agenda to follow GS/25-26/016. The Dean welcomed Ms Anne Marie O'Mullane (Deputy Secretary to the College) and Ms Sheena Brown (Project Manager) from the Secretary's Office who both spoke to the item. The revised Fitness to Practise Policy was approved by Board on 4 December 2024. Since then, substantial changes have been made to the 2010 Consolidated Statutes, Chapter on Student Conduct and Capacity and associated Schedules, including the Schedule dealing with Fitness to Practise (now Schedule 4). In light of these changes, the Fitness to Practise Policy has had to be revised to align it with the Statute changes. The circulated memorandum listed a summary of those proposed changes. In addition, during the consultation process, the School of Medicine raised further concerns relating to the section in the policy that deals with Students with Disabilities. In response, some additional changes have been made and summarised in the memorandum. Finally, all relevant stakeholders with programmes that have fitness to practise requirements, listed on the circulated Policy Review Record Sheet, were notified of the proposed changes and invited to provide final feedback. The revised policy was

approved by Executive Officers Group on 11th September 2025. The GSC committee was asked to approve the changes to the revised policy which will be also brought to Undergraduate Studies Committee on 16th September, and pending USC and GSC endorsement, to the University Council for approval. It will then go to the Risk and Compliance Committee and pending its approval, to Board for final approval.

The Dean noted that the substantive discussions had already been incorporated. The School of Medicine DTLP confirmed the School's endorsement of the proposed changes to the policy. There was unanimity to endorse the revised policy.

Decision GS/25-26/006: The committee endorsed the Revised Fitness to Practise Policy for Council approval.

The Dean thanked Ms Anne Marie O'Mullane and Ms Sheena Brown for their presentation and members for their endorsement of the revised policy.

XX GS/25-26/007 Update on RPL at Trinity – Memorandum from Dr Graham Glanville, Enterprise Development Officer (Careers and Development) to present

The item was deferred to the next meeting.

XX GS/25-26/008 Report on Titles Associated with Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students and Memorandum submitted by Dr Cormac Doran Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education

The Dean invited Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) to speak to the item. The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) circulated a report which provided a contextual understanding of the various titles employed over the years in the PGR environment to describe the role of staff and non-staff members acting as PGR supervisors. The report also contained a brief explanation of each title and their use in Trinity, external universities and funding agencies.

With a view to discussing possible titles, roles and responsibilities at the meeting, members were asked to consider three scenarios to be accommodated, listed at the end of the report. The proposed title for a single supervisor was Principal Supervisor (noting that as is already provided for within the Calendar, a Principal Supervisor must be replaced by Acting Supervisor if absent for three or more months). When two supervisors carry equal responsibilities, one must assume administrative responsibilities and is currently designated as the Principal Supervisor, with the other supervisor designated a Co-Supervisor. The most complex was a scenario with a team of three or more supervisors with each having different responsibilities and often varying in status as internal or external to Trinity. Agreement on titles and responsibilities in this context would enhance transparency and clarity for all concerned.

The Dean noted that currently only two titles are widely used in Trinity namely Principal/Primary Supervisor and Co-supervisor (eligible and willing to take on the role of Principal Supervisor). Models of supervision have changed in recent years and in many disciplines shared supervision is the norm.

During a discussion which ensued various views on how to capture supervisors' titles were shared. The Dean summed up the essence of the discussion by noting that the preferred model was that the titles of Principal Supervisor and Co-supervisor be retained differentiating for appropriate supervisors if they were external. As is currently the case Principal Supervisors must be employees of the university with access to SITS. There was general support for a proposal that all other members of the supervision team be designated as Co-supervisors, whether internal or external. Any revisions

to the current titles should ensure transparency and avoid overly technical terms, as such terms can often lead to confusion.

Action GS/25-26/008: Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) to revise the proposal on roles, responsibilities and titles associated with PGR supervision, as discussed for finalisation at the next GSC meeting.

The Dean thanked the Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) for his presentation and members for their participation in the discussion.

XX GS/25-26/009 Report on Trinity Travel Awards in 2024/25 and Memorandum submitted by Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education

The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) noted that the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies administers the Trinity Travel Award, which supports PGR students attending conferences related to their research or undertaking short-term research abroad to complement work already carried out in Dublin. The circulated report provided data on 85 successful award applications in 2024/25. It included breakdowns by award category, Faculty and School, applicant numbers, and destination countries. The report concluded with a number of recommendations aimed at increasing the impact of the award.

The report noted—perhaps unexpectedly—that the majority of applicants were in the early stages of their PhD. Supervisors should therefore be encouraged to more proactively invite applications from students in their third or fourth year, as these students are typically better positioned to travel to present their research findings, and engage in academic networking, thereby enhancing their career prospects post-graduation. While multiple applications are not discouraged, priority is given to those who have not previously received funding, in the interest of fairness.

Members were asked to consider the report and its recommendations with a view to encouraging PGR students to apply for Trinity Travel Awards. In a brief discussion, some members expressed concern that the maximum award amount of €750 for travel outside the EU is too low. The Dean noted that students often supplement the travel award with funding from additional sources. The underlying principle is that the award is intended to cover only the travel component of participation, allowing funding to be extended to as many students as possible. Some Schools also support students in other complementary ways—for example, by reimbursing conference registration fees. In response to a query, the Dean clarified that, in accordance with College auditing requirements, all reimbursements need to be made on a receipt basis for expenses already incurred.

Action GS/25-26/009: DTLs are asked to reach out to supervisors in their Schools and encourage them to proactively support third- and fourth-year PhD students in applying for Trinity Travel Awards, with a view to presenting their research findings at academic conferences.

XX GS/25-26/010 Adjustments to Delivery of Non-Resident PhD Induction Module and Memorandum submitted by Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education

The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) noted that at the May 2023 meeting, the Graduate Studies Committee approved a report on the pilot Non-Resident PhD programme offered by a small number of Schools. The report recommended scaling up the pathway across the College for Schools that wish to participate. It also proposed that students undertake an on-site induction, allowing them to network with other Non-Resident students and their supervisors, and to engage in workshops provided by services such as the Library and the Postgraduate Advisory Service on accessing support while studying remotely.

The report also highlighted challenges students face in obtaining the required 20 ECTS credits while undertaking a Non-Resident PhD. One of the key outcomes of the May 2023 discussion was therefore the proposal to introduce a mandatory, interdisciplinary 5 ECTS four-day induction programme to provide a shared Trinity experience for Non-Resident PhD students. This proposal was subsequently approved by the Graduate Studies Committee in October 2023, with a planned start for students registering from September 2024.

However, due to staffing constraints, it was not possible to offer the module in 2024/25. Additionally, it became apparent that some Non-Resident students were unable to travel to Ireland to attend an in-person module due to conflicting caring responsibilities, illness, or the high cost of travel and accommodation in Dublin. The current mandatory nature of the orientation may therefore discourage strong candidates from applying to Trinity.

In light of these challenges, the committee has been requested to suspend the module for the 2025/26 academic year. As continuing with the current module format is not an option, four options were presented to members for consideration:

1. Reduce the credit volume requirement for non-resident PhD students from 20 ECTS, given that it is difficult to offer students modules to that credit volume. Instead, initial online workshops would be set up to create a network and community of practice.
2. Continue with the credit requirement but permit students to seek an exemption from attendance.
3. Reduce on-campus requirement to two days with the remaining two days online.
4. Shift the existing module content into an online mode of delivery.

In a discussion which ensued it was noted that the practicalities have proved prohibitive for students to avail of the current in-person induction format, that the requirement of mandatory 20 ECTS has been difficult for Schools to provide modules beyond the online College ones and an alternative solution should be found to integrate the Non Resident PhD students rather than via the credit route. Integration through social events might be a possibility. Turning existing PGT modules that are delivered in person to Masters students into a hybrid delivery has not worked for Schools that have tried it, as it required significant extra work for the teaching staff to facilitate a very small number of Non Resident students. In addition, Student Counselling and Disability Services are not accredited to work outside the jurisdiction and Non Resident students cannot avail of these student support services. The committee concluded that the 20-credit requirement has not achieved the intended connection to the university and an access to its research culture. It appears that PGR students do not have to be in Trinity to have a Trinity experience. However, delivery of research methods and research seminars should be reflected on by Schools to enable Non Resident students to access them. Hybrid delivery should also be expanded.

Decision GS/25-26/010: The committee agreed to take out the requirement of 20 credits and to suspend the in-person induction module for 2025/26.

The Dean has proposed the establishment of a small Working Group to collaborate with the Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) in defining appropriate parameters for what could be achieved within the 20 ECTS originally ringfenced for the Non-Resident PhD pathway.

Action GS/25-26/010: The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) will reach out to DTLPs and Schools to establish a Working Group—potentially including supervisors of Non-Resident students—to develop proposals for replacing the original 20-credit orientation module.

XX GS/25-26/011 Delegation of authority for online viva voce examinations - Memorandum from Dean of Graduate Studies

The Dean noted that, through the existing “Procedures for the Operation of an Online Viva Voce Examination of a Research Thesis or Dissertation”, Trinity aims to offer significant flexibility to Schools in conducting Viva Voce examinations for PGR students. Point 7 of the Procedures states that, on an annual basis and at the invitation of the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Studies Committee may approve the delegation of authority regarding local decisions about the format of the Viva Voce examination—subject to the student’s agreement—to the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) within each School, with the Dean available for consultation if needed.

The Dean invited members to approve the delegation of this authority to Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) within each School for the 2025/26 academic year. The Dean concluded by proposing that the Calendar be amended so that the delegation occurs automatically on an annual basis, removing the requirement for GSC approval each year.

Decision GS/25-26/011: The Calendar will be amended to include a provision that, subject to the student’s agreement, authority for local decisions regarding the format of the Viva Voce examination be delegated to the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) within each School, with the Dean of Graduate Studies available for consultation if required.

XX GS/25-26/012 Horizon 2: PGR monthly update (September) – Dean of Graduate Studies to present

The Dean provided a brief overview of recent Postgraduate Renewal developments on behalf of its Programme Director who is currently on leave. She referred to the “Strategic Plan 2025–2030”, which specifically called out the development of a Doctoral Academy and a Graduate Education Hub, as well as the ambition to implement a Triple I framework for postgraduate students. She noted that three substantive agenda items on the current agenda originate from the Renewal Programme.

XX GS/25-26/013 HORIZON 2: PGR Assessment and Progression - Memorandum seeking Stage Gate Approval to proceed to Implementation Phase based on approved development presented by Helen O’Hara, (Lead) / Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager), Work Package #3 (Systems & Process)

The Dean invited Mr Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager) and Ms Helen O’Hara (Lead, WP#3) to provide an update on the progress of integrating PGR progression into SITS. She emphasised that this new functionality is transformative, enabling supervisors and DTLs to track where students are on their PhD trajectory. This includes key indicators such as registration readiness and stipend eligibility. Consequently, it is imperative that supervisors ensure student data in SITS is accurate and up to date.

Action GS/25-26/013: PGR supervisors, DTLs and relevant School staff will ensure that student data in SITS is accurate to enable students to register and where appropriate, to receive stipend payments.

The Senior Project Manager provided an update on the progress to date. SITS has been updated in line with all the requirements agreed in March—delivered on time and within budget. Between mid-August and mid-September, the project successfully completed a testing phase, with no significant issues identified. This has enabled the project to move forward to the next stage: User Acceptance Testing (UAT), involving eleven volunteer Schools, which is scheduled to begin the following week. The Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will also be finalised to ensure GDPR compliance. The final product is scheduled to go live on the 10th October, allowing the March 2026 cohort to use the full functionality. This will serve as an additional test before the system is rolled out to the

significantly larger September intake. Training for both staff and students will be provided. A longer-term consideration remains around defining where responsibility for the ongoing management and ownership of the final product will lie.

Subject to the successful completion of testing, formal approval of the DPIA, and resolution of any outstanding concerns—including those raised by Academic Registry—the Graduate Studies Committee has given approval in principle for the work package to move from the Development to the Implementation Stage.

Decision GS/25-26/013: The GSC has approved in principle for WP#3 to proceed from the Development to Implementation Stage with the PGR Assessment and Progression project.

In response to the query, the Dean clarified that WP#3's ongoing work plan includes additional tasks, such as integrating external examiner nomination forms into SITS to automate the process.

The Dean thanked the WP#3 Senior Project Manager for his presentation.

XX GS/25-26/014 HORIZON 2: PGR Stipend Payment Process - to note and approve report on progress to date presented by Helen O'Hara (Lead) / Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager), Work Package #3 (Systems & Process)

Mr Mark Sheridan moved on to speak to the PGR Stipend Payment Process, closely aligned to the progression work, where WP#3 have also carried out substantial enhancement of the stipend payment process for internal and external awards and have prepared a report of progress to date. Additional improvements include for example a high level infographic created to guide students and staff through the stipend process, a revised graduate student stipend proposal form, a new HR webpage with information on stipend payments and a guide for students how to input their bank details into CoreHR.

The Senior Project Manager took members through a number of further tasks WP#3 will still be addressing between now and the end of the first semester. DTLPs expressed their appreciation for the work carried out by WP#3 and shared some difficulties experienced with setting up or maintaining uninterrupted stipend payments in their Schools. The Dean advised that addressing some of the issues will require a student case route and a manual intervention while in other instances, a SITS-based solution may be possible.

In response to a query noting that some Chinese funders restrict student funding below the level of internal stipend payments, the Dean noted that external funders should align to €25k which is a nationally accepted level of PGR living stipend baseline in Trinity and in Ireland. There is no obligation on any School to top up the external funding shortfall for the student. Schools are not obliged to accept any applicant coming in on a stipend below the baseline.

The Dean thanked WP#3 and HR, who have worked collaboratively with it to introduce clarity on timelines and processes.

XX GS/25-26/015 HORIZON 2: PGR Student Lifecycle Resource - Memorandum seeking Stage Gate approval to proceed to implementation to be presented by Director of Student Services (Lead) / Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education), Work Package #5 (Student Experience)

The Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education) noted that WP#5 have over the past couple of years created a resource for PGR students highlighting their journey from registration through to graduation, indicating requirements, supports and suggested resources (for research, ethics and

social understanding skills) for each stage of that lifecycle. The PG Renewal Steering Committee has given a green light for the implementation. In the short term, the key information has been collated in an interactive pdf, located on the Graduate Studies website capturing both academic and non-academic links. Within the next week, PGR students will be emailed to be introduced to the resource and invited to engage with it. This will be rolled out as a pilot until November, and student feedback will be appreciated to underpin improvements. A report evaluating the resource will be submitted to the December GSC meeting. In the medium term, it is intended that the information will provide a blueprint for the creation of an online interactive portal for students and Trinity staff.

Action GS/25-26/015: DTLPs have been asked to reach out in their Schools to make sure that students and supervisors are aware of the resource, and to include reference to it in any orientation events School is hosting and forward feedback to the Assistant Academic Secretary (Graduate Education).

A concern was raised by the School of Mathematics DTLP that the mechanism facilitating Triple I is not clearly formulated and transparent in terms of staff roles and responsibilities especially facilitating and signing off on students travelling abroad for research purposes. The Dean clarified that any absence of three months or more should be submitted as a formal request for her approval. She also offered to guide the DTLP through the agreed framework offline.

XX GS/25-26/016 HORIZON 2: PGT Research Supervision Framework - Memorandum seeking approval for proposed amendment to the framework to be presented by Prof Richard Reilly / Prof A Clements (Co-Leads) / Dr Rionnagh Sheridan (Programme Coordinator / Analyst), Work Package #1 (Postgraduate Taught)

The item was moved up the Agenda to follow GS/25-26/004. The Dean welcomed Prof. Richard Reilly and Dr Rionnagh Sheridan to speak to the PGT research supervision framework. Prof. Reilly noted that WP#1 were seeking an amendment to the framework approved by Council in April 2024. In a review of the Framework the WP found that in some Disciplines, PhD students perform a key role within the research environment, while in others PhD students are rarely involved in supervision of taught Masters' research. The WP has therefore reformulated the proposed language related to PGR students to reflect the contribution of PhD students as distinct from the responsibilities of the Primary Supervisor and the Co-Supervisor.

Specifically, the descriptor of a PhD student's role in taught Masters' supervision has been revised from "May be part of a supervisory team in co-supervision arrangements" to "May be part of a supervisory team where this aligns with disciplinary norms or is otherwise deemed appropriate by the School". Retained is the original provision that PhD students "May not act as a primary supervisor or co-supervisor" but they can "contribute to the supervision process by offering peer support, technical expertise, and mentorship."

By creating clear roles and responsibilities for each supervisor category and emphasising collaboration, communication and effective research mentorship of the PGT Masters student, the framework now enhances the quality, relevance, and impact of PGT research, contributing to the PGT students' academic and professional development.

The Dean noted with regret that Graduate Student Representatives have not been elected yet to participate in the meeting. However, the Postgraduate Student Support Officer offered his support for the proposed amendment on behalf of the student voice but put forward a question whether PhD students might expect payment for or could refuse to participate in the PGT supervisory process. Prof. Reilly clarified that payment does not seem to come into the process in the surveyed Schools but as it was not part of the WP remit the issue was not explored. Some members expressed

the view that the PGR student's participation in the PGT supervisory process should not be mandated. It was recognised that disciplines may have in place their own established arrangements.

Decision GS/25-26/017: The committee endorsed for Council approval a change in the wording describing the role of a PhD student in taught Masters' supervision from "May be part of a supervisory team in co-supervision arrangements" to "May be part of a supervisory team where this aligns with disciplinary norms or is otherwise deemed appropriate by the School".

The Dean thanked Prof. Richard Reilly and Dr Rionnagh Sheridan for their presentation and members for their contribution to the discussion.

GS/25-26/017 Any Other Business

There was none.

XX Section B for Noting and Approval

XX GS/25-26/018 MSc in Midwifery Practice and Leadership - Fee schedule for the Framework Structure in 2025/2026 submitted by the School of Nursing and Midwifery

On 25 January 2024, GSC approved the introduction of a framework structure while retaining the traditional structure, of MSc in Midwifery Practice and Leadership (ref decision GS/23-24/093) and subsequently, Council approved that structure under Section B, CL/24-25/092. The outstanding fee schedule for 2025/26 for that framework structure was now endorsed for Council approval by the committee noting that it is aligned to similar taught postgraduate programmes offered by the School of Nursing and Midwifery under the framework.

Decision GS/25-26/018: The committee recommended for Council approval the fee schedule detailed for the framework structure (already approved CL/24-25/092) in 2025/26 for MSc in Midwifery Practice and Leadership.

Section C for Noting

XX GS/25-26/019 Update on Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era Module - Memorandum submitted by Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education

In recent weeks the Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era (CA7000) module, the only mandatory PhD module, has undergone a high-level update by a working group comprising staff from the Library, the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Dean of Research. As part of that review, outdated information was identified in Section 1 on research ethics. For that reason, that section has been de-activated. Students can complete the rest of the module, where only minor updates were necessary. Students will score a full credit volume upon completion of the module without Section 1. A full revision of the module content is proceeding in parallel and should be finalised for the cohort entering in 2026-27. The availability of the module under review to students in 2025/26 remains unaffected.

GS/25-26/020 GSC Results of 2024/25 GSC Survey – Memorandum from Dean of Graduate Studies

In line with Quality Assurance procedures, members of the Graduate Studies Committee positively self-evaluated the overall functioning and effectiveness of the committee in 2024/25 through a survey circulated in May 2025. A full summary of the survey responses was presented with the circulated memorandum.

GS/25-26/021 GSC Terms of Reference for 2025/26 – Memorandum from Dean of Graduate Studies

In line with its statutory obligation, the Graduate Studies Committee is required to annually review its Terms of Reference (TOR). A discussion resulting in updated terms was carried out in Michaelmas Term 2023. The revised Terms of Reference were re-approved by GSC on 19 September 2024 without modifications and would apply for the current 2025/26 academic year. Amendments for 2026/27 are to be raised under AOB, for consideration at a subsequent GSC meeting in October.

The Dean noted that GSC TOR provides that “Two members nominated by the Dean of Graduate Studies may be co-opted to attend meetings” as required.

The Dean thanked all the committee members. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12.40 pm.

Prof. Martine Smith

Date: 18 September 2025