



GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held in College Boardroom in Trinity Business School
at 10am on Thursday 29 January 2026

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 Xiaoning Liang, Trinity Business School

Professor Gavin Doherty, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Padhraig Fleming, School of Dental Science

Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education

Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, School of Engineering

Professor Alice Jorgenson, School of English

Professor Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics & Microbiology

Professor Christine Morris, School of Histories & Humanities

Professor Théophile Munyangayo, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies

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 Brian Keogh, School of Nursing & Midwifery

Professor Cathal Cadogan, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Graham Cross, School of Physics

Professor Selim Gulesci, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy

Professor Eavan Brady, School of Social Work & Social Policy

Professor Susan Pike, Academic Director, Portal

Patricia Maguire, Academic Secretary (TT&L)

Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience

Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

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

In attendance:

2nd Graduate Student Representative (PGR): Lindiwe Mpofu

In attendance for all items:

Leona Coady, Programme Director, Postgraduate Renewal Programme

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

In attendance for Postgraduate Renewal Items:

Ewa Adach, Programme Analyst and Coordinator (PG Renewal)

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

In attendance for all items (Guests):

Prof. Joseph Roche, Associate Dean of Research, on behalf of Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research
Prof. Meg Ryan on behalf of Prof. David Hevey, School of Psychology DTLP

Apologies:

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research
Professor Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry
Professor Evangelia Rigaki, School of Creative Arts
Professor Micha Ruhl, School of Natural Sciences
Professor, David Hevey, School of Psychology
Professor Jude Lal Fernando, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies
1st Graduate Student Representative (PGT): Azial Zafar
Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L)
Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services
Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor's Office

In attendance for individual items:

Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs, TTL) for item GS/25-26/073
Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary – Academic Affairs (TT&L) for item GS/25-26/074
Mark Sheridan, Senior Project Manager (Postgraduate Renewal Programme) for items GS/25-26/079 and GS/25-26/080
Ronan Hodson, Subcommittee on English Language (WP#1: PG Taught) for item GS/25-26/081
Prof. Gillian Wylie, Subcommittee on Cyclical Review (WP#1: PG Taught) for item GS/25-26/082
Orla Bannon, Lead, Work Package 4 (Triple I: Intersectoral, International, Interdisciplinary) for item GS/25-26/083

The Dean extended a warm welcome to new Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) from the Schools of Psychology, Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies, and Trinity Business School who were commencing as GSC members. She advised that the main PG Renewal Programme will conclude at the end of December and expressed her thanks to Ewa Adach and Dr Rionnagh Sheridan, Programme Analysts and Coordinators, for their participation in the GSC meetings, noting that they will be moving to other roles within the College.

The Dean also welcomed Prof. Wladislaw Rivkin, newly appointed as the first Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and confirmed that he will be added to the committee membership for the remainder of the current academic year in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Graduate Studies Committee, which allow for the co-option of two additional members. His membership status will be updated to permanent as part of the TOR review for the next academic year.

XX Section A

XX GS/25-26/067 Minutes of GSC of 27 November 2025

The minutes were approved as circulated.

XX GS/25-26/068 Matters Arising

The Dean advised members that all Actions from the November meeting had been completed or attended to. She also noted that all Decisions on Agenda A and B from the previous meeting were approved by the last Council on 10 December 2025. Most Matters Arising were closed off and covered in the Dean's memorandum circulated in advance of the meeting.

XX GS/25-26/069 Appointment of new Associate Dean of Graduate Studies – Dean of Graduate Studies to present and Prof. Wladislaw Rivkin to attend

The Dean introduced Prof. Wladislaw Rivkin, who was appointed in December by the Board as the first Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. Beginning in February 2026, he will support “Thrive: Trinity’s Strategic Plan 2025–2030” by strengthening postgraduate taught provision, expanding external partnerships, advancing future-focused teaching and lifelong learning initiatives, and driving innovation in teaching practice. This new role reflects significant progress made through the Postgraduate Renewal Programme and recent HCI initiatives, and it will complement the remit of the existing Dean of Graduate Studies. As part of his initial work, the Associate Dean will meet with individual Schools to identify the supports they require for their PGT activities and to assess strategic needs for the proposed Graduate Education Hub.

Welcoming the appointment, members of the GSC congratulated Prof. Rivkin and expressed their best wishes for his success in advancing his strategic vision and supporting the ongoing evolution of postgraduate education across Trinity.

Action GS/25-26/069: The Associate Dean to circulate his designated email address to GSC members.

XX GS/25-26/070 Discussion of Report of Taskforce on Academic and Institutional International Links - Dean of Graduate Studies to introduce

The Dean noted that the Board has already approved the report but requested input from the relevant committees specifically regarding the proposed governance structure and its interface with the Board. The Dean emphasized that the report itself cannot be amended at this stage; however, members were invited to provide feedback on future governance arrangements. As no feedback was forthcoming during the meeting, the Dean asked members to share any comments after the meeting by the middle of next week.

Action GS/25-26/070(i): DTLPs were asked to forward their feedback on the “Report of the Taskforce on Academic and Institutional International Links” to the Dean by the middle of the following week.

Action GS/25-26/070(ii): GSC Secretary to recirculate the Report of Taskforce on Academic and Institutional International Links to DTLPs.

XX GS/25-26/071 Policy on Minimum Annual PhD Stipend for Funded PhD Students in School of Engineering - Prof. Breiffni Fitzgerald (School DTLP) to report on recently approved School policy

The Dean noted that the School of Engineering was the first School to have formally approved a policy establishing a fixed stipend level aligned with the Trinity Research Doctorate Awards (TRDA) rate of €25,000 per annum for four years. Under the policy, all funded students in the School will receive the stipend. While some other Schools have adopted the stipend level in practice, none has yet done so through formal policy. The Dean invited the School DTLP to speak to the policy, offering it as an example for other DTLPs who may wish to consider a similar approach within their own Schools. The new stipend policy follows a research strategy launched by the School of Engineering the previous year to emphasise enhanced financial supports for PGR students. As part of the new strategy, the School identified an internal mechanism to raise the stipends of all externally funded PGR students to the TRDA rate. The School also confirmed that it had sufficient overheads to support the new funding scheme. From March 2026 onward, no new PGR candidates will be admitted with external funding below the approved stipend level.

It was further noted that the majority of students currently receiving stipends below €25,000 were funded through the Chinese Scholarship Council, which provides support at a level of approximately €16,000 per year.

In the brief discussion that followed, the following points were noted:

1. The Dean acknowledged that Schools vary significantly in their budgetary capacity; however, the School of Engineering has demonstrated good practice by transparently formalising a local policy. The School of Medicine is adopting a similar approach.
2. Schools engaging with external donors are expected to ensure that PGR student funding is aligned with the TRDA rate.
3. The IUA has made efforts to engage with the Chinese Scholarship Council and has been awaiting a response.
4. Schools should review PGR funding provided through benefactions with a view to aligning it with the TRDA rate and may seek assistance from the PG Renewal Programme Director in doing so.
5. The potential long-term impact of the new policy on the overall number of PGR students in the School of Engineering has yet to be determined.

The Dean thanked the School of Engineering DTLP for presenting this example of good practice to the committee.

XX GS/25-26/072 Revised Research Supervision Policy – Dean of Graduate Studies to present

The Dean noted that the policy had been thoroughly discussed at the November meeting and had since undergone further refinement, particularly with respect to terminology. Key updates included clarification of the term “co-supervisor” and a broader application of the term “acting principal supervisor.” The Dean emphasised the significance of the policy for the committee and reiterated that it was the responsibility of the DTLPs to ensure that it was fully fit for purpose. As there were no further comments, the committee endorsed the revised Research Supervision Policy for submission to Council.

Decision GS/25-26/072: The committee endorsed the revised Research Supervision Policy for Council approval.

XX GS/25-26/073 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures for Conduct of School Appeals Committees - Dr Elizabeth Donnellan, Education Policy Developer (Academic Affairs, TTL) to present

The Education Policy Developer presented the revised Appeals Policy updated with the received feedback. Although the intention had been to circulate the changes by email prior to the last Council meeting in December, the extent and significance of the revisions made that impractical. The Education Policy Developer went through the tracked changes. The Dean confirmed that the Policy applies to appeals also resulting out of placements which are professional modules belonging to the course structure. She noted that the separate Procedures document sets out membership of the appeals committee appropriate to each School. The Education Policy Developer was asked to underline in the Policy that appeals submitted after the deadline will only be considered by the chairperson “in exceptional circumstances” and that insertion will affect bullet point 9.7 on page 4 of the Policy, and the corresponding sentence in the Procedures document in section 4.6 on page 6.

Members were also asked to consider a separate document, “Procedure for the Conduct of School PG Appeals Committees”. The Education Policy Developer has incorporated all feedback received by email to date; however, the meeting was an additional opportunity to reflect on whether the proposed Procedures were workable within the context of each School. A short discussion of the Procedures resulted in two amendments. Firstly, rewording of Section 4.2.2 has been agreed to

specify that where an appeal is upheld and permission is given to the student to repeat a research element/project or dissertation, the format of the research element/project is at the discretion of the Programme Director and repeating this component may incur additional fees. Secondly, the wording of section 4.5 will change (i) to specify that members of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee must recuse themselves if they have a conflict of interest with the case being heard by the Committee and (ii) to allow for flexibility in the membership to account for discipline/subject requirements for external members (e.g. representatives of accrediting bodies or placements providers).

The committee asked the Education Policy Developer to circulate by email the following day a revised copy of the draft Procedure for the Conduct of School Postgraduate Appeals Committees with a view to securing members' approval by lunchtime on Tuesday the following week for submission of the documentation to the upcoming Council.

Decision GS/25-26/073: Subject to an additional check of the revised documentation to be circulated the committee endorsed for inclusion on the February Council agenda, under Section A.2: Revised Appeals Policy (Academic Progress), New Procedure for the Conduct of Courts of First Appeal and New Procedure for the Conduct of School Postgraduate Appeals Committees.

The Dean thanked the Education Policy Developer for her presentation and the committee members for their contribution to the discussion.

XX GS/25-26/074 Proposal for General Postgraduate Certificate exit award - Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary – Academic Affairs (TT&L)

The Assistant Academic Secretary – Academic Affairs reminded members that in Spring 2025, the Graduate Studies Committee (GS/24-25/118) and Council (CL/24-25/193.1) approved, in principle, a proposal to explore introducing a general Postgraduate Certificate as an exit award for PGT students who do not complete their Masters or Postgraduate Diplomas but have achieved between 30 and 55 ECTS credits. The proposed general Postgraduate Certificate would be available (a) for programmes without a parallel framework structure, and (b) where a student does not meet the Programme Learning Outcomes required for a named Postgraduate Certificate within an existing framework. The award would constitute a Minor Award at NFQ Level 9, consistent with practices across IUA universities and with Trinity's academic regulations.

Academic Affairs, working with Schools, the Academic Registry, and the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, has developed the regulations and operational outline for the new award. Feedback from, and following, the November 2025 GSC meeting has been incorporated into the proposal, as visible through tracked changes. Schools agreed the specific titles of the general Postgraduate Certificate for each School, which were circulated for members' approval. Members had no additional queries and, without further discussion, endorsed the proposed School-specific titles pertaining to the general Postgraduate Certificate listed in Table 1, as well as the regulations for the proposed general Postgraduate Certificate exit award, for Council approval.

Decision GS/25-26/074: The committee endorsed the proposed regulations and School-specific titles pertaining to the general Postgraduate Certificate exit award for Council approval.

XX GS/25-26/075 Horizon 2: Supervision Agreement Review Report – Prof. Rachel McLoughlin Lead (Work Package 2: Research) to present and Ewa Adach (PG Renewal Programme Analyst and Coordinator) to attend

The item was deferred pending receipt of an update arising from the consultation with IFUT. The Dean noted that the supervision agreement will continue to be made available across the university and will be updated with feedback from IFUT when available.

XX GS/25-26/076 Horizon 2: Report on impact of Thesis Committee Resources update - Prof. Rachel McLoughlin Lead (Work Package 2: Research) to present

WP#2 has worked over the past number of years to develop resources to support Thesis Committees. In October 2025, the group undertook further consultations to evaluate the impact of this work. Feedback was extremely positive and led to the development of four additional enhancements, now presented for GSC approval. These enhancements focus on increasing communication, visibility and awareness of Terms of Reference for Thesis Committees and Thesis Committee Guidelines, promoting compliance with the Thesis Committee model, providing training to supervisors and Thesis Committee members and establishing a cyclical review process to ensure the resources remain fit for purpose meeting stakeholder needs. The WP#2 Lead drew members' attention to the expectation that the online progression platform will significantly increase student visibility of Thesis Committee resources to which hyperlinks have been provided. It was also noted that awareness of the Terms of Reference and the Thesis Committee Guidelines should be strengthened by making them a standing agenda item at the first meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee each year.

Action GS/25-26/076: To enhance awareness of the Terms of Reference for Thesis Committees and the Thesis Committee Guidelines by making them a standing agenda item at the first meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee each year.

In the brief discussion that followed, the following points were noted:

- 1) Training for Thesis Committee members has been embedded into the induction programme for Assistant Professors. In addition, a standalone training video outlining the role and responsibilities of Thesis Committee members will be developed.
- 2) It was confirmed that, given limited academic staff resources in some Schools, the Thesis Committee Chair may be selected from the two existing members and does not need to be an independent third member. However, where concerns are identified in advance regarding a student's potential progression, an independent Chair should be appointed to ensure impartial oversight of the assessment process.
- 3) It was clarified that appeals arising from the work of a Thesis Committee are normally escalated to the Dean rather than to the School Appeals Committee.

Decision GS/25-26/076: The committee endorsed the recommendations pertaining to Thesis Committee Resources for Council approval for implementation from Semester 2 in the current academic year.

XX GS/25-26/077 (a) Horizon 2: Report on Impact Assessment of PDP Pilot - Prof. Rachel McLoughlin Lead (Work Package 2: Research) to present and Ewa Adach (PG Renewal Programme Analyst and Coordinator) to attend

The WP#2 Lead noted that an extensive pilot on the implementation of the Professional Development Planning (PDP) Template, carried out with TRDA students in 2025, evidenced that students and staff valued the PDP process as a useful framework, and identified a number of additional enhancements to consolidate its impact and sustainability. These include raising awareness of the PDP process, continuing to provide both online and in-person training, guidance and support for skills development and career planning to PGR students to enable effective engagement with the PDP process, providing training for research supervisors to effectively support students' PDP efforts, and in the short-term creating an online, interactive version of the PDP form

(such as a dynamic PDF) and integrating it into the online research progression platform and e-portfolio. The PDP is embedded within the PGR student annual progress report to enhance its effectiveness and impact. The PG Renewal Programme Analyst and Coordinator noted that the recording of the most recent online training workshop is available on Horizon 2 website. The Dean noted that a further in-person workshop is scheduled in April targeting students heading for the June progression. There is also a slot on the upcoming Induction Programme for research supervisors to include information on the Professional Development Planning resources.

Action GS/25-26/077(a): PG Renewal Programme Analyst and Coordinator will circulate to DTLPs for dissemination in their Schools a link to the recording of the most recent online training workshop on Professional Development Planning resources available on H2 website.

Responsibility for overseeing the PDP, implementation of the recommendations and supporting PGR students in developing their comprehensive multidimensional skillset is expected to be incorporated into the remit of the proposed Doctoral Academy, as outlined in Strategy 2025–30.

Decision GS/25-26/077(a): The Graduate Studies Committee endorsed the proposed PDP recommendations for Council approval for the implementation from Semester 2 in the current academic year.

XX GS/25-26/077 (b) Horizon 2: PG Student Development Hub on LinkedIn Learning - Ewa Adach and Dr Rionnagh Sheridan (Programme Analysts & Coordinators) to present

In June 2025, Council approved a joint proposal from WP#2 (Research) and WP#4 (Triple I) called the “Blueprint for Triple I and the Multi-Dimensional Skills Development Framework” mapped to the skill domains in the IUA Doctoral Skills Statement (2021) and the European Competence Framework for Researchers (2025). Further work enabled the development of a catalogue of all credit and non-credit training offered by Trinity’s internal providers aligned to the skill domains. The PG Renewal Team has since identified student-led training resources available through LinkedIn Learning as a foundation for a dedicated Trinity PG Student Development Hub to provide on-demand flexible access to curated training, organised by themes and proficiency levels and aligned with multidimensional and Triple I skill development. All registered students and staff can access LinkedIn Learning with their Trinity credentials.

To date, nine training collections have been curated with support from LinkedIn’s account management team. This work will continue. IT Services will explore the potential adoption of SCIM User Management, and a dedicated webpage will be developed on the Graduate Studies website to allow students to search and filter content by competency, proficiency level, and other relevant criteria. Wider student-support services—such as Careers, SLD, the Library, and PAS—will be invited to engage with the initiative. A comprehensive communication plan will also be implemented with a view to formally launching the Hub platform, which is already live, in Semester 2, potentially in alignment with the PDP Workshop in April 2026.

The Dean observed that the IUA skills sets across the various domains demonstrate substantial opportunities for research-skills development, while training gaps remain in some other areas. The currently curated LinkedIn Hub is envisaged as an effective means of addressing these gaps across all six domains, providing an additional comprehensive resource for Trinity’s postgraduate students. The Dean also noted that digital literacy has recently been incorporated into the European Skills Framework and is expected to appear in the IUA guidelines in due course. This competency is already included within the LinkedIn resources and has been integrated into the Hub, alongside relevant Trinity-internal offerings. The Dean emphasised that a supervisor’s primary responsibility is to support the development of a student’s research skills, whereas the broader professional

development of PGR students falls within Trinity's institutional remit. The Hub is therefore an important mechanism for fulfilling that responsibility.

The meeting has provided an important opportunity to promote the Hub platform among DTLPs, with the expectation that they will disseminate this information within their Schools to increase awareness of the Hub among academic staff and postgraduate students.

XX GS/25-26/078 Horizon 2: PGR Student Lifecycle Resource Evaluation Report – Breda Walls (Director of Student Services) to present

The Director of Student Services reported that, following the rollout of the PGR Student Lifecycle Tool—which captures the full postgraduate research journey and incorporates Triple I, as well as the Doctoral Skills Portfolio, and which was piloted from September 2025 (GS/25–26/016)—a review was carried out by Work Package 5 (Student Experience). Feedback from the pilot was overwhelmingly positive. The review resulted in three recommendations for further enhancement: the development of an additional, more detailed resource for each phase of the lifecycle, including pre- and post-registration; the creation of general checklists aligned with existing forms, policies, and timelines; and the inclusion of additional resources, links, and student-identified supports to strengthen the practical value of the Lifecycle Tool. The Dean noted that it is intended that the final resource be fully interactive, possibly with an AI agent incorporated to improve efficiency. The committee thanked WP#5 for their work on the resource and approved the recommendations.

Decision GS/25-26/078: The committee endorsed the proposed Student Lifecycle Resource Evaluation Report recommendations for Council approval.

XX GS/25-26/079 Horizon 2: Update on PGR assessment and progress, and implications for Thesis Committees – Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager, PG Renewal) and Dean of Graduate Studies to present

An update was provided on the Implement stage of the Research Progression deliverable (integrated into SITS). The first primary users of the functionality are the March cohort (181 students), who are expected to complete their Annual Review/Confirmation report by 31 January 2026. The feedback to date is positive. The Senior Project Manager outlined key enhancements developed and released since the launch in November. He also underlined that the PG Renewal Programme Team operates in a period of hyper-care where members monitor the functionality alongside answering any queries related to the new functionality. The majority of the queries have been mainly low or no risk - some unrelated to the new functionality – all resolved. The hyper-care support and monitoring of the functionality is to continue for another month.

In response to generic queries, the Senior Project Manager clarified that

- DTLPs receive notifications on student progression within their respective Schools every Thursday but have ongoing access to the system at all times.
- The team are aware that some Schools have not yet captured all PGR structured modules on the system, which presents a challenge as these should have been recorded. However, Schools may still progress students even if no credits have been captured.
- The recording of external modules completed by PGR students is currently being assessed, with consideration being given to how these should be captured in the system.
- The current reports completed as part of PGR progression are saved to the system; however, any supplementary documentation uploaded in addition to these reports is deleted when the student progresses to the next academic year. Care must therefore be taken to ensure that all essential information is included within the official reports, which are preserved on the system in perpetuity.

- Data retention approach will be developed as agreed by the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Academic Registry and the IT Services and approved by the Data Protection Officer.
- Consideration is currently being given to how best to set up functionality for transferring a PGR student from the MSc register to the PhD register.

The Dean raised a particular issue highlighted in the current phase namely that Thesis Committees were not always aware of the implications of the recommendations they made. There were instances where Thesis Committees recommended that a full-time student in year 2, or part-time student in year 3, be given an additional six months to re-present for a confirmation review at that point. However, such a recommendation would have registration and fee implications. The Dean wanted to flag such issues with DTLPs to ensure that recommendations were made with full visibility on their consequences.

Action GS/25-26/079: DTLPs to forward their specific queries pertaining to PGR student progression and confirmation in their respective Schools directly to the Senior Project Manager.

XX GS/25-26/080 Horizon 2: Thesis examination process and functionality (update on approach) – Mark Sheridan (Senior Project Manager, PG Renewal) to present

The Senior Project Manager guided members through the slides outlining the proposed roadmap for the four-phase Thesis Submission and Examination functionality in SITS. The Student- and School-centred Phase 1 is provisionally scheduled for completion by June 2026, followed by the Examiner-focused Phase 2, to be delivered by October 2026. Phases 3 (Major Revisions/Minor Corrections) and 4 (Award and Archiving in TARA) will follow, with completion timelines yet to be confirmed. The proposed system-level design and development approach will ensure timely and effective delivery of value to users. Members expressed their appreciation to the Senior Project Manager for the excellent work undertaken and endorsed, for submission to Council, the proposed roadmap for the four-phase Thesis Submission and Examination process to be implemented in SITS.

Decision GS/25-26/080: The committee endorsed for Council approval the proposed roadmap of four-phase Thesis Submission and Examination process to be set up in SITS.

XX GS/25-26/081 Horizon 2: Principles for review of English Language Assessment Framework - Ronan Hodson, Admissions Officer (Subcommittee on English Language - WP#1: PG Taught) to present

The Admissions Officer, a member of the Subcommittee on English Language (WP#1: PG Taught), noted that in 2024, GSC and Council approved a revised schedule of admissions requirements for English Language. Although tests are reviewed and re-calibrated and entry requirements for programmes change, there is at present no formal structure to ensure that there is a coordinated and regular cycle of reviewing English language admissions requirements. WP#1 has set out a proposal for how to change that situation – essentially having a 3-year cycle of review, a set of principles guiding that review, access to data from students to support any recommendations and a balanced membership. Work Package 1 has considered how the English Language criteria for admission might be reviewed to ensure that regular quality checks and re-evaluation of accepted tests and scores are carried out, and that the admissions criteria for English language remains robust and up to date.

The proposed review model stipulates a three-year review cycle, aligned with the English Language Policy, and requires that the process be overseen by the Secretary's Office Review Panel, comprising the Associate Director of Recruitment (Trinity Global), the Head of Admissions, and the Director of the Centre for English Language Learning & Teaching (CELLT). The scope of the review will include the approval of tests, the assessment of their validity and comparability, and the removal of tests

that no longer meet requirements. Sufficient data needs to be collected including internal anonymised data on the academic performance of students linked to English language test scores.

In response to a query, the Dean clarified that applicants to the PhD register need not only be excellent in their proposed research domain but also meet the required English language competency level stipulated for admission. An online Pre-sessional English Language programme is currently available to applicants nearly meeting that threshold. Professional accreditation bodies may dictate higher English competency levels than those ordinarily required by Trinity. In some Schools students on taught Masters show low level of English competency in spite of the submitted satisfactory test results.

Members expressed their appreciation to the Admission Officer for the excellent work undertaken and endorsed, for submission to Council, the proposed review of English Language Assessment Framework based on a three-year cycle.

Decision GS/25-26/081: The committee endorsed for Council approval the proposed principles for the review of English Language Assessment Framework based on a three-year cycle.

XX GS/25-26/082 Horizon 2: Guidelines on Development of Cyclical Review Framework for PGT Programmes - Prof. Gillian Wylie (Subcommittee on Cyclical Review - WP#1: PG Taught) and Dr Rionnagh Sheridan (Programme Coordinator and Analyst) to present

Prof. Gillian Wylie, a member of the Subcommittee on Cyclical Review (WP#1: PG Taught), noted that in March 2024 the Graduate Studies Committee had approved the recommendations of Work Package 1 (Postgraduate Taught) to develop a new structure and process for the cyclical review of PGT programmes. Prof. Wylie then guided members through a slide presentation outlining a proposed review framework developed in response to that mandate. In the first instance, the remit of the cyclical review will be limited to new PGT programmes, with a view to extending the process to all existing programmes in due course.

The cycle will be based on three points of evaluation:

- i) Annual Self-Reporting — a structured, light-touch review by programme committees.
- ii) Three-Year Review — an initial viability and performance review following the third intake to a new PGT programme; the review could be extended to all PGT programmes in time.
- iii) Five-Year Review — a periodic, in-depth quality review for all established programmes dovetailed with Trinity's Quality Review cycle.

The three review points are intended to provide structured moments of reflection for Programme Directors and Programme Committees, working in collaboration with their Schools and Faculties. Two limitations regarding the applicability of the proposed cycle were brought to members' attention. First, the three-year review cycle has limited applicability to framework programmes, as these programmes will not typically have three intakes within a three-year period. Any future development of the review cycle will therefore need to adapt the approach for framework programmes to ensure it meets their specific requirements. Second, externally accredited professional programmes will be excluded from the proposed review cycle.

A full system design for cyclical review has yet to be developed; however, the proposed roadmap outlines a potential overarching strategy and thematic structure to guide programme reviews at the one-, three-, and five-year intervals. Dr Rionnagh Sheridan, Programme Coordinator and Analyst, outlined the proposed future development steps, on the understanding that Council approval of the

review cycle can be secured. Ongoing engagement and the gathering of feedback from Schools, Faculties, and Professional Services will be essential to inform the next phase, which will involve the detailed design and development of standardised templates and guidelines, the adaptation of the review model for specific disciplines and framework programmes, and the integration of the project with digital reporting and existing QA processes. Should the proposal be approved by Council, it may in future form part of the programme of work of the proposed Graduate Education Hub.

The Dean emphasised that the purpose at this stage is to secure the Committee's agreement that the proposed approach is a reasonable and appropriate way to proceed, enabling the team to begin developing the measures required to ensure an efficient and effective mechanism through which Schools can monitor their programmes and make informed decisions for improvement. It is not intended to introduce an additional layer of quality assurance or to require Schools to gather further data solely for the completion of new forms. The intention is also to develop a roadmap that will support the identification of implementation costs.

As part of the brief discussion that followed, the following points were noted:

1. Finance training for rotating Course Directors should be provided as part of the initiative.
2. A mechanism is needed to capture centrally the changes to PGT programme curricula introduced through devolved local approval processes at School level.
3. The effectiveness of the three-stage review cycle depends on Schools being able to interpret data that is readily accessible, rather than sourcing new data; such data must therefore be provided centrally.
4. Existing quality review processes for PGT programmes should be utilised, so as not to impose additional administrative burdens on academic or administrative staff.

The GSC endorsed the proposed roadmap for the tripartite review cycle of PGT programmes for submission to Council for approval.

Decision GS/25-26/082: The GSC endorsed the proposed roadmap for the three-stage review cycle of PGT programmes for Council approval

XX GS/25-26/083 Horizon 2: Triple I context and benefit statement with a roadmap for Trinity's Triple I framework implementation – Orla Bannon, Lead (Work Package 4: Triple I) and Dr Rionnagh Sheridan (Programme Coordinator and Analyst) to present

Orla Bannon, Lead for Work Package 4 (Triple I: Intersectoral, International, Interdisciplinary), reminded members that in April/May 2025 the Committee and Council approved the blueprint for a Triple I conceptual framework. This framework provides postgraduate students with a structured approach to engaging in impactful developmental experiences across disciplines, complementing their academic programmes and supporting the acquisition of a multidimensional personal skillset.

At the current meeting, the WP#4 Lead guided members through the "Context and Benefits Statement," which outlines the rationale for the Triple I framework. The framework engages students, enterprise, and community partners, distinguishing the Trinity postgraduate experience as uniquely collaborative. The WP#4 Lead also sought the Committee's endorsement to bring to Council a proposed roadmap for the phased introduction of the Triple I framework, ensuring alignment with School and College strategic priorities and supporting readiness among students and enterprise partners to participate.

The Committee endorsed the six-phase roadmap, which sets out a sequence of foundational and governance work to develop initial costings, followed by the development of systems and processes, piloting of the programme, preparation for rollout, progressive implementation across the

University—including raising awareness among students and supervisors of the training opportunities—and, finally, the embedding and enhancement of the framework as a core element of the Trinity postgraduate experience. The roadmap provides an institution-wide, structured approach to embedding Triple I experiences as opportunities, rather than obligations, for Trinity postgraduate students, in line with the ambitions of the Strategic Plan 2025–2030. Endorsement was given on the understanding that an initial level of staffing resource will be required to commence the work and that more detailed costings will be developed on the basis of the pilot programme.

The WP#4 Lead presented the proposed measures of success, noting that their effectiveness will depend on the establishment of appropriate systems to capture and evidence impact. She concluded by emphasising the importance of strong communication and promotion of the training opportunities to students and supervisors to ensure meaningful engagement and uptake.

The Associate Dean observed that many Triple I training opportunities may already be embedded within existing postgraduate courses and core programme components. Where this is the case, such elements should be identified and explicitly reflected in students' CVs, and similar mapping exercises could be undertaken at School level. The Associate Dean also highlighted the importance of institutionally cultivating partnerships with enterprise partners within the Intersectoral Triple I domain to broaden the range of placement opportunities available to students. Increased promotion to external organisations was encouraged so that Triple I, as a defining element of the Trinity postgraduate experience, becomes more widely recognised and valued by prospective employers.

Decision GS/25-26/083: The Committee endorsed the roadmap for the implementation of Triple I for submission to Council, on the understanding that an initial business case will be developed, informed by the pilot programme.

XX GS/25-26/084 Horizon 2: PG Renewal Accomplishments Report – Leona Coady, Programme Director (PG Renewal) to present

The item was deferred to the next meeting due to insufficient time for its consideration.

XX GS/25-26/085 Any Other Business

There was none.

XX Section B for Noting and Approval

XX GS/25-26/086 Request from School of Medicine to amend English language requirements for admission to MSc in Diagnostic Radiography to be aligned to Radiographers Registration Board (CORU) to be implemented from admissions into 2026/27 academic year

The committee endorsed a School request to revise current English Language admissions requirements for entry to MSc in Diagnostic Radiography to seek from admissions into 2026/27 a minimum IELTS (or indicator) score of 7 with a minimum score of 7 in each band.

Decision GS/25-26/086: The committee recommended for Council approval that from admissions into 2026/27 “All applicants to Trinity are required to provide official evidence of proficiency in the English language. For candidates who are not native English speakers and have not completed a degree through the medium of English, in line with the CORU Standards of Proficiency for Radiographers, applicants are required to have a minimum IELTS score of at least 7 in each category and at least 7 overall or its equivalent.”

XX GS/25-26/087 Request from School of Nursing and Midwifery to amend English language requirements for applicants registered with Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) as Nurses and Midwives to be implemented from admissions into 2026/27 academic year

The committee endorsed a School request to revise current admissions requirements resulting from Decision GS/23-24/092 for English language proficiency for applicants whose first language is not English.

Decision GS/25-26/087: The committee recommended for Council approval a replacement of “Registration with the NMBI was based on the applicant’s IELTS score” by a new admissions condition of “Applicant had a valid English language qualification that is accepted under Trinity’s English Language Requirements Band B at the time of registration with the NMBI.” related to Decision GS/23-24/092 effective immediately.

XX GS/25-26/088 Commencement date of 3rd intake to Postgraduate Diploma in Irish for Teachers (DPCED-ITEF-1P01) to be corrected to September 2026 - request from Department of Irish (SLLCS)

The committee noted that the government-funded Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Irish for Teachers (DPCED-ITEF-1P01) will most likely have a third funded cohort due to start in September 2026/27 rather than in September 2027/28 as incorrectly stated in the Council-approved course proposal (CL/23-24/234.1 on 5/6/2024). The committee endorsed the correction for Council approval. There are no financial implications to the rectified date for the third intake.

Decision GS/25-26/088: The committee recommended for Council approval that commencement of the third cohort on the government-funded Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Irish for Teachers (DPCED-ITEF-1P01) be corrected from September 2027/28 to September 2026/27 for admissions purposes.

Section C for Noting

GS/25-26/089 Trinity College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin Students' Union/Aontas Mac Léinn Choláiste na Tríonóide (TCDSU/AMLCT) “Student Partnership Policy 2025-2026”

Members noted the Student Partnership Agreement between Trinity College Dublin and the Trinity College Dublin Students' Union/Aontas Mac Léinn Choláiste na Tríonóide as an important step in building a collaborative spirit of engagement between Trinity and TCDSU/AMLCT. The document was provided by the Dean of Students.

The Dean thanked all the committee members. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12.55pm.

Prof. Martine Smith

Date: 29 January 2026